METRO / A25

Claudine Barretto pregnant with first child

ENTERTAINMENT / F2

Legality of Wedding of the Year in Italy not exactly clear

NEWS / A2

Half of Filipinos still distrust GMA, according to Pulse Asia survey

METRO / A25

Muslim congresswoman goes berserk after accidentally eating pork

NEWS / A7

The Farm at San Benito tops 2nd AsiaSpa Baccarat Awards

Luxury hotel chain coming back to RP

By Philip C. Tubeza

SINGAPORE—(BA PLOT)—A LUXURY BOUTIQUE hotel chain, dubbed by a Filipino tourism official as at the top of its class, is returning to the Philippines more than a decade after it pulled out of the country.

Owners of the Banyan Tree chain gave one reason for their change of heart: The Philippines

LUXURY, A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, November 22, 2006 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 356 P18 www.inq7.net

Mystic prepares world for Christ's 2nd coming

By Nestor U. Torre

MOST FILIPINOS WERE GLUED TO THEIR TV sets on Sunday to witness the slugfest that was the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales match.

But 2,000 people chose to forego that excitement in favor of a much quieter but still intense "battle" for souls—a special "Day of Eucharistic Renewal" at the Philippine International Convention Center.

MYSTIC, A9

SC buries Cha-cha bid

But law on people's initiative is upheld

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE "GRAND DECEPTION" AND "GIGANTIC fraud" cannot continue, but a new petition for a people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution may now be backed by an enabling law.

Still voting 8-7, the Supreme Court yesterday denied with finality the motion for reconsideration filed by among others, Raul Lambino of Sigaw ng Bayan and the Office of the Solicitor General, on the dismissal of a petition for a people's initiative for Charter change preparatory to a shift to the unicameral-parliamentary system.

But in a reversal of its 1997 ruling, the high court found Republic Act No. 6735, the initiative and referendum act, sufficient for the political exercise.

"Ten members of the court reiterate their position, as shown by their various opinions already given when the decision herein was promulgated, that [RA] 6735 is sufficient and adequate to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative," it said in a resolution.

The seven who had voted on Oct. 25 to uphold Sigaw's petition (Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno and Justices Leonardo Quisumbing, Renato Corona, Dante Tinga, Minita Chico-Nazario, Cancio Garcia and Presbitero Velasco Jr.) found RA 6735 sufficient, and were joined by three

SC BURIES, A4

HANDS OF SOLIDARITY: Members of the Canadian Fact-Finding Mission to the Philippines, who meet with families of human rights victims in Quezon City, say they will ask their government to redirect $32-M aid from the "militarist" Arroyo administration to people's communities. They claim they were harassed by the military during their mission.

INFO, A3

Esperon defends move: 'That is my prerogative'

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. is standing by his decision to send 30 officers led by Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin to court-martial for mutiny, even though military prosecutors found no evidence to support the charge.

"If I have indeed not approved all their recommendations, that is my prerogative as the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," Esperon gruffly told reporters yesterday.

He refused to say if the pre-trial investigation (PTI) report submitted to him on Oct. 25 by the Judge Advocate General's Office (JAG) had recommended the dropping of mutiny charges against all 38 officers implicated in the coup plot in February.

President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a national state of emergency on Feb. 24, citing a leftist and rightist conspiracy to oust her.

The PTI panel composed of Col. Al Perfecto, Maj. Agustin Matanta and Maj. Victoriano Marbibis had recommended that only 18 of the 38 officers stand trial for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman (Article of War 96), which is a lower offense than mutiny (AW 67).

Esperon insisted he was not bound to uphold the PTI findings, which normally serve as basis for the AFP chief of staff's decision to convene a general court-martial.

The 233-page PTI report and its voluminous annexes of affi-

ESPERON, A22

Cayetano springs surprise on Arroyos

By Michael Lim Ubac

STRIKING BACK AT THE ARROYOS, House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday sought the expulsion of President Macapagal-Arroyo's son and brother-in-law from Congress for allegedly receiving kickbacks from the illegal numbers game "jueteng."

Cayetano's surprise move—in the presence of the President's husband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo—drew immediate objections from the Arroyos' allies in the House of Representatives and prompted the administration-dominated House committee on ethics and privileges to adjourn its hearing.

Mike Arroyo and his son Diosdado quickly left the building after the chair slammed down the gavel.

The targets of Cayetano's expulsion move were the President's son, Rep. Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, and her brother-in-law, Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo.

Mike Arroyo dismissed as cheap the hearing, reportedly expecting a showdown with Cayetano, who had accused members of the First Family of hiding billions of dollars in a German bank—a charge that has remained unsubstantiated.

Ray Roncken, lawyer of the First Gentleman, said his client was going to face

CAYETANO, A20

Customs man rises: ₱1,200 to P11 million

By Blanche S. Rivera

A BUREAU OF CUSTOMS OFFICER, who once had nothing but a watch, books and his clothes worth a total of P1,200, is now being investigated by the Office of the Ombudsman for amassing vehicles and other assets worth P11 million.

The Department of Finance-Revenue Integrity Protection Service (DOF-RIPS) yesterday asked the Ombudsman to suspend Felix S. Estibaudo, a Batangas-based customs operations officer, and to file administrative charges against him.

RIPS also sought the forfeiture of Estibaudo's alleged ill-gotten wealth in favor of the government.

Estibaudo, who started working for the Bureau of Customs as a gatekeeper in 1978, is now operations officer III with a monthly salary of P14,438. He owns five

CUSTOMS, A20

3 militants killed in Laguna, Surigao, Sorsogon

By Inquirer Staff

AT LEAST THREE MILITANTS WERE killed in separate incidents around the country amid demands by international business groups for an end to political violence.

The Melo Commission, formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo in August to look into allegations of extrajudicial executions, also announced yesterday it was resuming its hearings after a two-month break. Proceedings have been boycotted by leftist and human rights groups questioning the panel's independence.

Police said four gunmen shot and killed Andrew Ibiza, 48, union president at the Alaska Milk Factory, in San Pedro, Laguna, yesterday morning. A tricycle driver, Ramon Lande, was wounded in the attack.

In Surigao City, four armed men wearing bonnets shot and killed Roderick Arpili, 24, an organizer of the United Workers of Surigao del Norte, on Monday evening while he was watching television in his house with his family, police said. Arpili's wife and 8-month-old daughter were unharmed.

At Barangay Langili, Pilar, Sorsogon, the body of Domingo Marbella, 22, was found bearing bullet wounds and signs of torture. Marbella, a relative of an official of the Gabriela Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, was one of two farmers abducted by armed men on Nov. 13. The other was still missing.

Last week, the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines (JFC) comprising businessmen from the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan urged President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration to put an end to political violence, saying it stalled foreign aid and investments.

Seven US-based apparel makers have re-

3 MILITANTS, A23

SLITHERING, SNEAKING out of Naia 8.

Lizards in diapers, snakes in bottles seized at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

LIKE A SEMESTER SEQUEL TO THE MOVIE "Snakes on a Plane," more than a hundred reptiles were discovered yesterday morning in the suitcases of a Filipino traveler bound for Bangkok at Centennial Terminal 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

An airport personnel said that all 50 monitor lizards were wearing disposable diapers, which were meant to conceal the smell of the reptiles' urine.

Erlinda Bergara, 42, was held by airport police and Bureau of Customs officers, and as of press time was being investigated by authorities.

Bergara denied owning the reptiles, claiming that a man at the Bacolod airport where she came from had asked her to bring the suitcases for him.

The snakes were kept in various sizes of mineral water bottles while the lizards were separately placed inside jute (hemp) bags.

One 40-inch-long monitor lizard was already dead when the reptiles were shown to the media while the other lizards were still apparently struggling to free themselves from the bags.

Several snakes of various colors were still alert despite their confinement. They hissed and slithered inside the wet bottles.

Customs examiners initially counted 50 monitor lizards, 38 cobras, 21 tiger cobras, 20 skinks (small insect-eating lizards) and two iguanas.

Perfecta Hongjoco, regional director of the

LIZARDS, A20

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Rain showers and the scattered thunderstorms will continue mostly cloudy skies with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Second FRONTPAGE

Economy boost of no help to GMA ratings

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMY HAVE DONE LITTLE TO improve the standing of President Macapagal-Arroyo among Filipinos, 50 percent of whom distrust her six months ahead of the 2007 elections, a Pulse Asia survey showed.

Pulse Asia said its November 2006 Ulat ng Bayan survey showed that one in two respondents (48 percent) were critical of the President's performance, 25 percent approved and 26 percent were undecided, roughly the same as in July 2006.

The survey also found that 38 percent of Filipinos distrusted the President, with her trust ratings declining most significantly among the Class E, the poorest Filipinos.

Despite the administration's oft-cited achievements in the economy and fiscal sector in the last two quarters preceding the survey, the President's "overall performance ratings are not significantly different from those recorded in July 2006," Pulse Asia said.

It noted that there was hardly any change, positive or negative, in the President's overall trust rating between July and November.

Can't please 'em all

The survey of 1,200 adult Filipinos, 18 years and older, conducted between Oct. 22 and Nov. 6, has a margin of error of three percentage points.

"It's (don't please everybody)," was the reaction of Chief of Staff Michael Defensor to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

Defensor said the President would continue to focus on the job of sustaining the economy and continuing to hope that the public would eventually appreciate her work.

The survey was done at a time when the President was endeavoring the gains that the economy has achieved in the past five months.

The stock market has surged to its highest level in nine years and the peso climbed to a four-year high against the US dollar in fixed rates, aided by the President boosting investor confidence, increased government revenues and narrowed the budget deficit.

The survey suggested Ms. Arroyo's dismal rating has tested other campaigns to shift the political tectonics in a parliamentary set-up was defeated last month in the Supreme Court.

Shift to Parliament

The President's opponents claim that Ms. Arroyo was pursuing the shift to political reforms to stay in power after 2010, when her term as President expires.

Disapproval of the President increased across all geographic areas and socioeconomic classes, except in Mindanao and among members of class ABC, where disapproval ratings remained about the same.

More respondents in Metro Manila (56 percent), the rest of Luzon (51 percent) and poorest class E (51 percent) were critical of her performance in the past three months.

The percentage of those critical of Ms Arroyo's performance posted the highest increase in class E and in the Visayas. Among the poorest class E, disapproval of President Arroyo's performance increased 7 percentage points, from 44 percent in July to 51 percent in November.

In the Visayas, where the President's approval rating was highest at 46 percent in November, the percentage of those who disapproved of her performance increased 7 percentage points, from 38 percent in July to 45 percent in November.

In Metro Manila, the percentage of those critical of her performance increased from 50 percent in July to 56 percent in November.

In the area of fiscal ratings, one-of-out of every two Filipinos (50 percent) dont rate the President, while 21 percent express trust in her and 28 percent are undecided to say whether they trust or distrust her, the survey said.

Vice President Noli de Castro and Senate President Manuel Villar enjoyed the highest approval ratings among elected officials, with 54 percent and 46 percent approving of their performances, respectively.

The President scored the lowest approval rating (23 percent) and the highest disapproval rating (48 percent). Villar garnered the lowest disapproval rating (22 percent), while Filipinos were most undecided toward the work done by Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban (40 percent).

Following the SC decision to junk the people's initiative petition, performance and trust ratings of both the high court and the Chief Justice improved. *Nikko Dizon, Inquirer Research with MEC Cabacungan Jr. and AFaced Reuters*

HONASAN STRUGGLES with his crutches as he arrives in court for his arraignment. AFP

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Gringo seeks 'due process'

By Tarra F. Quismundo

VISAYAN: A PUBLIC HERE, captured coup plotter Gregorio Honasan hinged his way to court yesterday, almost nine months after he was charged for the July 2003 failed coup.

But his scheduled arraignment was postponed as the jailed former senator and Army colonel asked that the proceedings be deferred and that his case be sent to the Department of Justice for reinvestigation.

Lawyer Lauro Gutierrez also presented Honasan's certificate of Bar for Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, a facility run and secured by the Philippine National Police, arguing that "the compliance (PDF) caused his bar jailer" at the same time.

Dishevel told the court his client should be held at the Makati City Jail, if not released immediately.

"We ask for the dismissal of the arraignment because of our pending motion for reinvestigation, plus the fact that he is still under jaw medication and we were unable to discuss the multiple counts of entering a plea," Gutierrez told Judge Oscar Pimentel.

He argued that still in bandages, Honasan arrived at the old Makati City Hall at 7:40 a.m., more than an hour before proceedings began, under tight guard by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the PNP Special Action Force and the Makati Special Weapons and Tactics team.

"His doctor had advised him to use a wheelchair, but he did not want to be seen in public looking weak. That's why even if it's a bit painful, he used crutches," said Gutierrez.

Honasan was kept inside a holding area in one of the offices of the old city hall, where the hearing was held, for security reasons, Chief Makati Prosecutor Aquino Bautista allowed the visit. Honasan's wife is waiting for the judge.

Honasan would have been asked to enter a plea to the non-bailable offense of coup d'etat filed against him for allegedly conspiring with rebel soldiers who took over the Oakwood Premier hotel in Makati on July 27, 2003. An arraignment phase in accused under the court's jurisdiction, paving the way for a trial.

As the prosecution did not object to the request for deferment, Pimentel granted Gutierrez's oral motion and gave the state prosecutors 10 days to file their comment on the motion and the same amount of time for the defense to answer it.

Honasan is one of seven leaders of the Philippine Constitutional Brotherhood Inc. (PCBI), a military fraternity. Belatedly, the DOJ charged for the murders just hours after President Macapagal-Arroyo placed the nation under a state of emergency last Feb. 24.

Dismissal

Late August, Pimentel dismissed the charges against two of Honasan's coaccused, retired Colonels Virgilio Briones and Romeo Lopez, for lack of probable cause.

Some 31 junior military officers and soldiers are also facing a separate coup-plot trial in Pimentel's salon in the Oakwood incident.

In his motion, Gutierrez said Honasan "was denied due process" as the DOJ allegedly did not allow him to reply to the charges before the case was filed in court. Honasan is a complaint from the DOJ.

The lawyer said Honasan never got the chance to answer the charges during DOJ's preliminary investigation of the case from 2003 to 2005 because of "the confluence of events as heard by the seconds of the case," such as "defective" service of subpoenas and postponed hearings, among others.

He also asked the court to release Honasan from custody, noting a suspension of the enforcement of the arrest warrant that the police had used to take Honasan into custody last week in Quezon City.

"If his motion for reinvestigation] is granted, he should be released immediately," said Gutierrez. *With a report from Jaime Laygo Aya Santos*

Barge with sludge from Guimaras oil spill sinks

A BARGE CARRYING 10,000 tons of sludge from a devastating oil spill off Guimaras Island capsized off the coast of Misamis Occidental, officials said yesterday, raising fears of another environmental mishap.

The barge, towed by oil refiner Petron, was being towed to a processing plant in Pilar, Mis. Occ. when it sank on Monday night about four miles (6.4 km) off the coast here.

No indications

"We're still investigating the incident," said Benito Abiasen, deputy chief Coast Guard, adding that there were no clear indications the oily sludge had spilled. The vessel's crew was rescued.

The barge was carrying debris from the site of the Solar 1, which sank in rough seas in August and leaked around 500,000 liters of bunker oil, affecting 40,000 people and more than 300 km (125 miles) of coastline in the central Philippines.

Calmer weather

Around 1.4 million liters of oil remain trapped in the tanker, buried about 840 meters (2,100 feet) under water off coastal Guimaras Island, and authorities have said they will wait until calmer weather in January to siphon it off.

Not a threat to health

A spokesperson for Petron, which had also chartered the Solar 1, said the company had test equipment to detect up the latest sinking, adding that the debris "poses no threat to health." Environment group Greenpeace said the oil group should be held accountable for the barge capsizing.

"Petron has yet to fully assess for its disastrous oil spill in Guimaras, but here it is again with another environmental disaster in the making," the organization said in a statement.

Agencies alerted

Local officials said giant waves and strong winds could have caused the accident. Fishing had been prohibited in the area for four days ago due to bad weather.

"They [Petron] reported a thin layer of oil. Like a rainbow on the water, not the thick sludge," Lawrin Leo Oyaogoa, governor of Misamis Occidental province, told DZRH television.

"They are assuring us that the [federal] government will look into it very quickly. They've alerted disaster agencies just in case there may be contamination."

Reuters

NEVER SAY DIE

Palace still not giving up on Charter change

By Christine O. Avendaño

IF MALACAÑANG HAS RELENTLESSLY lost faith in its support for the people's initiative to amend the Constitution, it will not be an offshoot now that its allies in the House of Representatives are embarking on the "Sandugo."

Palace officials said they were not giving up on Charter change despite yesterday's setback at the Supreme Court.

Most important reform

"We respect the Supreme Court decision on the people's initiative," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "It will not stop us, however, from our advocacy that we need fundamental reform in order to remove the remaining stumbling block to our competitiveness."

Bunye also said Malacañang believed that Charter change was "the most important reform we have to make."

Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on political affairs, said the high court's decision "formally reclaims the constituent assembly (Con-ass) mode of changing the Constitution."

Claudio said the decision was when administration allies were waiting for so that "they can now go all-out for Con-ass."

He said the Palace intended to send out the message to its allies in Congress "to dispel any doubt or speculation about its stand on Charter change."

"The President is in full support of efforts in Congress for Con-ass," Claudio stressed, adding:

Stakes high

"There's still time for a final push. A reasonable window of opportunity is still open through Con-ass, and we should take advantage of that because the stakes are high."

He pointed out that there was still one more month in work in the session.

Malacañang had earlier said its allies could successfully push for a constituent assembly before Dec. 21, or before Congress goes to holiday break.

Claudio said the Palace also intended to reach out to allies that the administration was "prepared for any electoral scenario in 2007."

SC buries motion for reconsideration on Cha-cha petition

from page 1

ules had ruled against it (Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and Justices Adolfo Azcuna and Cosmedo Ynares-Santiago).

The five others (Justices Antonio Eduardo Nachura, Renato Corona, Alicia Austria-Martinez, Conchita Carpio-Morales and Romeo Callejo) did not rule on the matter of sufficiency because they believe it is not material to the case, said the tribunal's spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez.

He said that with the decision, a new petition for a people's initiative that complies with the provisions of RA 6735 may now be entertained by the Commission on Elections.

The Comelec had earlier dismissed the petition for a people's initiative on the basis of the 1997 Supreme Court ruling. Sigaw et al. subsequently asked the high court that RA 6735 be deemed sufficient.

Revision, not amendments

But Alan said Sigaw would still use the RA 6735 for the petition for a people's initiative.

"The decision's means that what is to be presented during the oral arguments and various petitions would be given due course because what they were asking for would involve a revision of the Constitution. Even if 6735 is insufficient, what they were presenting could now be granted for the reason that there were not amendments but a revision of the Constitution," he said.

The petition also cannot be entertained because it tackles several subjects when RA 6735 requires that only one subject be covered, according to Elkin.

The Supreme Court also unanimously lashed, for "utter lack of merit," the petition of the Sabong bayan Movement Foundation Inc. for Panganiban and Carpio to inhibit themselves from ruling on the motion for reconsideration.

The Supreme Court had said the two justices were biased and could not rule fairly on the matter.

No strong language

In denying the motion for reconsideration, the high court did not use the strong language that marked its Oct. 25 ruling.

It said it had duly passed on the "basic issues" and "no substantial arguments were presented to warrant the reversal of the questioned decision."

In the strong written by Carpio, the high court had described Sigaw's petition as a "grand deception" and a "gigantic fraud," saying the group failed to show 6.3 million signatories the full text of the proposed amendments.

"This court exists to defend and protect the Constitution. To allow this constitutionally infirm initiative, propelled by deception by gathered signatures, to slip back principles in the Constitution is to allow a observances of (it). To allow such alteration and destruction is to lose this court's raison d'etre," the tribunal had said.

It had further said that Sigaw's proposals were erroneous and not amendments, and that the people's initiative could only be used for proposed amendments.

The Oct. 25 decision did not rule on the adequacy of RA 6735, but the separate opinions of the justices revealed their stand on the issue.

In the 1997 ruling, Panganiban dismissed with the majority opinion declaring RA 6735 inadequate for a people's initiative.

Give it a rest

With the Supreme Court's final junking of the petition, senators called on President Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies in the House of Representatives to abandon the "Charter-Change express."

"I call upon Speaker [Jose] de Venecia and the Presidential party [members] to, at least, show some respect and give the people a certain degree of stability in our political scene and the people can prepare for the elections next year as part of the process," Sen. Francisco Tatad said.

Defeat spoke with experience because before sponsoring on the floor the proposed P1.126-trillion budget for 2007, including the budget for the national and local elections.

"The Supreme Court has spoken. Let us all put this behind us, and prepare for the political and democratic exercise," he said.

The measure predicted that the administration's second option at amending the Charter—the Shaw-headed constituent assembly (Con-ass)—would eventually be overtaken by the campaign period and die a natural death.

"There's no more time for Con-ass. So there's no more use in reviving the Charter change issue," Drilon said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, also a vying senatorial slot, said advocates of Charter change should push it after the May 2007 polls.

"The election period begins in December, and the campaign period starts in February. We are already on the eve of election fever. Espousing Charter change at this time will be a disservice to the people," he said.

No surrender

But De Venecia and his allies are not throwing in the towel.

Gagadon de Kop. Lawmakers Arnulfo Fuentebella, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, told reporters that while the people's initiative option was dismissed, the majority in the chamber was about to complete the 195 signatures—or three-fourths of the entire membership of Congress—required to amend or revise the Constitution.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles acknowledged that the ultimate goal is a leap to the people's initiative.

"But Cha-cha (Charter change) is alive. We will now push for Con-ass and ask our senators to please join us now. Let Congress propose amendments to the Constitution and let the only source (things) to do," he said.

Nograles appealed to senators to "come to terms with reality" because "it's now or never."

Lawsuits called on Charter change advocates and the signatories to the people's initiative to "stop what could serve to get angry," saying "this is part of the democratic process."

He insisted that most of the 16 million signatures gathered by Sigaw, of which, he said, 6.3 million were verified by the Comelec, had come from "people who understood what they're signing."

Referring to the Supreme Court justices, Jurado said: "Let them examine their conscience. Did the members of the court vote to dismiss the petition on (the factual assumption that the people did not understand (the proposed) draft through a people's initiative)?"

White flag

He said that in his 25 years of teaching law, "we have always recommend that the Supreme Court is not a tyke of facts but only of law."

Sen. Ralfh Larson said it was now "time to move the white flag not only on the people's initiative but also on Con-ass."

He said the administration and its allies "should now prepare for the real reality in the 2007 elections because they will face a debacle."

Sen. Johnny Ansay, who had argued the Senate case against the petition before the high court, said the House should "act with dispatch" on its move to convene Congress into a constituent assembly.

"The House cannot go on this (on) indefinitely or dodge it all the time, as he derided stalling. That is not fair to the people," he said, pointing out that the debate had been raging for a year now because the proponents couldn't make up their minds on the mechanism said the mode is complex.

"It's time for the House leadership to line the ladder and see, like the Supreme Court, with finality," Ansay said.

Jurado said the ruling underscores the House would move shortly.

He said the 195 signatures would "show that we have good numbers in back us up when we converse in an assembly."

"The final say will come from the senator-bodies," he said. PDI reports from TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubay

Searching for the American Dream?

SWS defends hunger survey: It's a more reliable gauge than GNP

By Kara Pedrosa
Inquirer Research

ECONOMIST MISSES MANGAHAS, PRESIDENT of the survey group found Sibather Institute, defended their recent hunger survey as a more reliable indicator of worsening economic well-being than Gross National Product (GNP) figures.

"Survey responses on family experience of hunger are just as reliable as, for instance, responses on personal work, on which unemployment rates are based," Mangahas said.

Administration allies in Congress had described the recent SWS release on hunger and poverty, which showed family hunger at a record high of 2.4 million families this year, as "misleading."

Socialist Mangahas countered: "Downgrading the SWS measures as mere 'perceptions' of hunger is wrong, as well as cruel and misleading."

At the same time, Mangahas said: Hunger and poverty rates recorded in 2006 and for the last three quarters of 2006 "showed the emergence of the Gross National Product (GNP) as an indicator of economic well-being."

The SWS Quarterly Surveys on Hunger and Poverty showed that hunger ranged from 12 to 16.7 percent of families last year and from 13.5% to 16.9 percent in the first three quarters of this year. The subjects of hunger and poverty are the six regular components of SWS quarterly reports.

Overall hunger rates increased to 16.9 and 13.9 percent during the first two quarters of 2006, respectively. In 2005, per-quarter hunger rates were from 12.5 percent in the first quarter to 16.7 percent in the fourth quarter.

That year, the country's GNP, which takes into account incomes of Filipinos here and abroad, grew 6.5 and 6.6 percent in the first and second quarters. In 2005, per-quarter GNP growth steadily increased from 4.7 percent in the first quarter to 7 percent in the fourth quarter.

"A great challenge to meaningful economic research is to determine why hunger actually worsened tremendously despite GDP growth of recent years. No less important is to discover why hunger declined during 2000-2002, as that lesson may be learned from both good and bad fortunes," SWS said.

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Corrections

IN THE NOV 18 ISSUE, a Business story on Page B2—"SB Corp. settles deal with Rediversified"—misstated that Rediversified Finance Co. Inc. granted a P50-million loan facility to SB Corp. It was SB Corp. which extended a P50-million loan facility to Rediversified.

* * *

IN THE NOV 20 ISSUE, Wanda L. Quezon 109 "The Long View" column on Page A15 in the Opinion section misstated the name of one of the senators elected in 1941. The name of the senator is Abaya—not Reyes—Abaya.

* * *

IN THE NOV 20 ISSUE, a Lifestyle story on Page B1—"Three encounters of the 'T'bolt kind'"—carried an erroneous byline. The story was written by contributor Manchet Tinio—not Jessy Sy. Sy was the one who e-mailed the pieces to the Inquirer.

* * *

IN THE NOV 11 ISSUE, an Entertainment story on Page D1—"Touring with Ramsterdam"—misspelled the name of the regular overseas concert of Filipino artists. The name of the concert is Ramsterdam—not Ramsterdam.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Fact Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati-Pasong Tamo, Makati City; fax (632) 897-8332; e-mail: info@inquirer.com.ph or call (632) 896-6000 loc. 2612.

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Jobs in Jordan for maids only, warns RP envoy

By Rob Cuaresma

THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN JORDAN yesterday warned Filipinos against supposed job openings for jobseekers, hotel staff or nurses in the Middle East Kingdom, saying the Jordanian government generally limits the type of work open to foreign workers.

Jordan "only allows the employment of workers for entry into its labor market and maintains tight restrictions for other jobs," said Ambassador to Amman Jose dePalmaert Jr.

The envoy said applicants being enticed by certain recruiters in Jordan or the Philippines to join other Class Jobseeker services should be cautious and check such offers with the associate or with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in Manila.

And even those promised jobs as domestic workers in Jordan should also verify the legitimacy of their recruiters and the validity of their contracts especially with respect to the salary he explained.

Minimum wage

He reminded them that the Department of Labor and Employment has set a "minimum salary of $200 for Filipino domestic workers regardless of country of deployment."

Del Rosario spoke of a ticker wherein hiring agencies have been able to dupe Jordan-bound applicants into signing "side contracts" that are not only suspect for also ultimately force them to accept a salary much lower than what the DOLE has capped.

"In several cases, luxury workers, government employees and even teachers were induced to become domestic workers in Jordan through false promises of salaries higher than what they receive in the Philippines," he said, adding:

"The sad reality is that once they end up in Jordan, they realize that their lives have also changed in, in worst cases, end up with several months of unpaid salaries."

Such revelation make the applicants skip the pre-departure orientation seminar given by the POEA and other procedures "in their mad" to avail of "environmental workers."

Nomination of 4 bets for chief justice opposed

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE JUDICIAL AND BAR Council has received opposition to the nominations of four of the six candidates for the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, according to Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

Pangilinan, ex-officio member of the JBC which screens nominations to the judiciary, said opposition papers against Associate Justices Reynato S. Puno, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago and Leonardo Quisumbing and Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura were submitted to the JBC.

The other two nominees are Associate Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez and Associate Carpio.

Pangilinan said the filing of opposition against the nominees was part of the screening process.

The JBC is deliberating on the nominees, one of whom will be chosen by President Macapagal-Arroyo to succeed Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban who is set to retire on Dec. 7. The JBC is mandated to submit a short list of at least three names to the President.

Panganiban said the JBC met on Monday and tackled Malacañang's proposal to conduct public interviews of the nominees to ensure greater transparency in the selection process.

He said the eight members panel failed to agree on the proposal and is set to meet again tomorrow.

"I think the majority sentiment [in the JBC] is for public interviews but some of our colleagues are looking at the position of the Supreme Court [against it]," Pangilinan said.

Batangas resort wins Oscars of spa industry

THE FARM AT SAN BERTO IN LIPA, Batangas, has won the coveted Asia Spa Awards, considered the Oscars of the booming industry in Asia, in what is hailed as a boost to the country's medical-spa tourism.

In a glittering black- and red-themed cocktail evening at the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong recently, the Farm came out on top, taking the coveted Medi-Spa of the Year as well as Spa Cuisine of the Year, bringing to 18 their total Asian awards so far.

Health resort president Perla Ingjos Bompe accepted two glass sculptured Baccarat trophies for The Farm at San Benito.

She acknowledged a first-timer in the Medi-Spa category as "a well-deserved" win, but the other award for spa cuisine was "a career victory" for The Farm's vegetarian food philosophy.

"What we thought to be our (marketing) problem has now turned out to be our strength," she said in her acceptance speech.

The Philippines was nominated in several other categories including Spa Academy of the Year (Spa Professionals International Development Center, Parañaque), Spa Association of the Year, Spa Destination of the Year and Spa Interior of the Year (The Farm at San Benito).

Spa academy

Cathy Stillmann Turell received a prestigious nomination for the first spa school in the country in the Spa Academy category, which was eventually won by China Spa Academy of Thailand.

The selection by a panel of 20 Asia-based spa experts headed by Asiaspa magazine editor Catharine Nicol and CEO Olivier Bachet gave local entrepreneurs an indication of where the lucrative wellness market is heading.

Over 1,000 spa-industry VIPs, nominated spa representatives and personalities attended the awards night.

This year's awards were dominated by Asia's spa destinations, with India, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Maldives, Thailand, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong all winning awards.

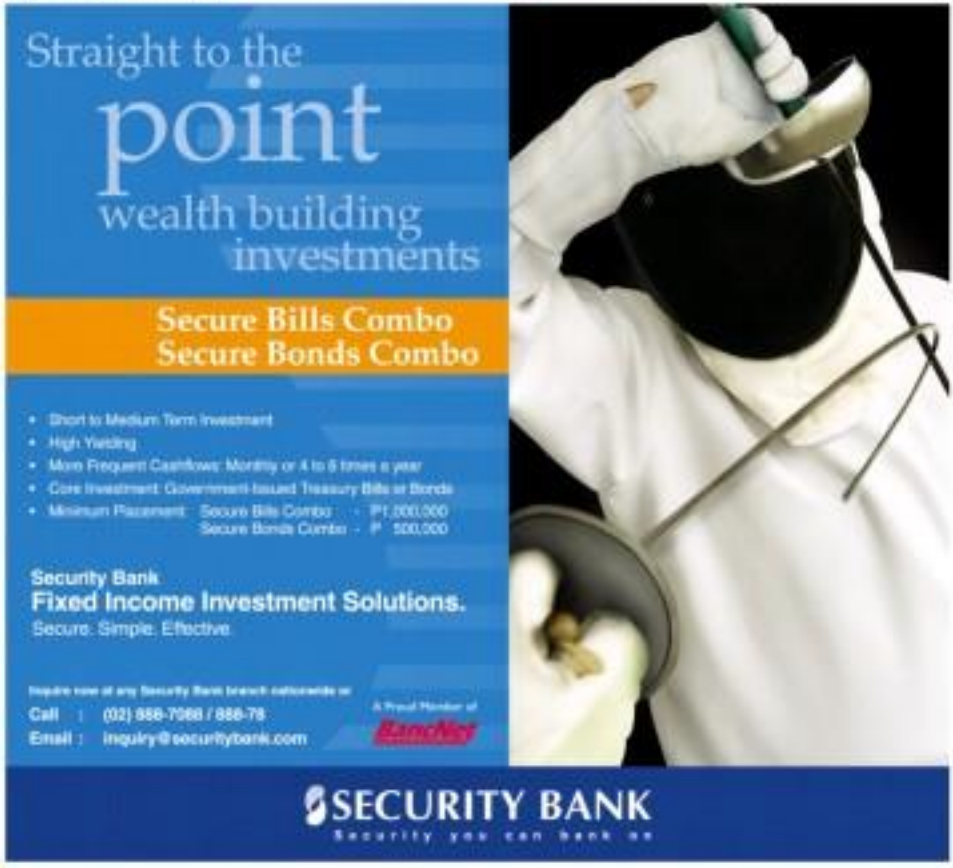
The big Asian-style hotel chains did well in other categories: Four Seasons Resorts and Spas in Interior Design of the Year for their resort in Langkawi and Marketing of the Year.

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts collected Spa Treatments of the Year for their Himalayan Healing Stone Massage and Interior Design of the Year for their resort in Sanya, China.

Some surprises included Day Spas of the Year going to Rivana Spa in Bali and Spa Capital of the year moving from Bali to the Maldives.

THE FARM at San Benito in Lipa, Batangas, Asia's Medi-Spa of the Year for the second straight year.

SPA CUISINE OF THE YEAR. Perla Bompe receives the twin awards Medi-Spa and Spa Cuisine of the Year at the second Asia Spa Baccarat Awards from editor Catharine Nicol and CEO Olivier Bachet.



Hospitals are RP's latest tourist destinations

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By Jocelyn R. Uy

TRAVEL PACKAGES TO THE PHILIPPINES may soon include not only a trip to Boracay but also to a hospital.

In a bid to boost the country's fledgling medical tourism business, the Department of Tourism yesterday said it was already working with four operators to come up with packages that would allow tourists to combine treatment and check-ups with rest and recreation.

"We are now [coordinating] with the PDA (Philippine Travel Agencies Association) of Nation (The National Association of Independent Travel Agencies)," said Cynthia Carrion, assistant secretary for Sports and Wellness of the Department of Tourism, at the Bulong Pulongan forum yesterday.

If plans push through, tourists who avail of a travel-medical package will have a chance to bask in the sun at one of the country's famous white beaches, have a check-up or surgery—at a price cheaper than what's offered by Bumrungrad Hospital, Thailand's leading medical services provider.

Bumrungrad International recently purchased a 40-percent share and acquired management of the 2-year-old Asian Hospital in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Executive package

Bumrungrad's marketing director Boden Total said patients on executive packages who go to Thailand are provided air tickets, a welcome massage, a city tour, trips to the hospital with hospital escort/car registration and pre-care orientation.

Thelma Clemente, president of the Philippine Hospital Association, said the country had all the potential to make a mark in the medical tourism industry. "We have competitive English-speaking staff who can give tender, loving health care that most patients abroad are looking for."

She said, however, that hospitals in the country need to be upgraded if they want to become the "newest hub of medical tourism in Asia."

There were many things to consider such as hotels, adequate transportation, immunization, food, availability of sports facilities such as golf courses, spas, beach resorts and interpreters to communicate the needs of foreign patients.

There are about 1,000 hospitals across the country. 80% of them are in Metro Manila, according to Clemente.

Meanwhile, Paul Ergoza, manager of the DOH's Medical Tourism Program, expressed optimism about the project, saying that the recently launched website, www.philippinemedicaltourism.ph, which links interested patients to hospitals providing world-class quality care at a fraction of the cost "has already produced actual business."

League of Municipalities of the Philippines

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE SENATE OF THE 13TH CONGRESS TO IMMEDIATELY PASS INTO LAW THE PROPOSED LAND ADMINISTRATION REFORM ACT (LARA)

WHEREAS, land is the most tangible and limited resources of any country. It is evidently the most valuable commodity prized by its citizenry and most controversial because not every person can have access to land;

WHEREAS, in the Philippines, the country's 30 million hectares of land is shared by the country's more than 80 million Filipinos. However, not all Filipinos have access to these lands much more own any land. Thus it is imperative that our country's land resources are effectively and equitably managed not only by this State and its agencies but by its people for the sake of generations to come;

WHEREAS, because land is a major resource of a country and its people, the utilization of our land resources for national and local development is crucial to maximize the benefits derived from the utilization, management and ownership of land. The responsibility of ensuring that the benefits accruing to the country's land resources lasts with national and local governments;

WHEREAS, in the case of national government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), it is mandated to administer, conserve, protect and manage almost 15.66 million hectares of forestlands or 52.9% of the country's total land area and in further mandated to dispose and issue titles to another 5.3 million hectares of untitled lands that has been released and classified as alienable and disposable (A & D) lands;

WHEREAS, on the other hand, the Land Registration Authority (LRA) is responsible for the registration of issued titles released by the DENR or judicially decreed lands totaling another 8.0 million hectares. However, both agencies operate on totally different systems of records, information and document management systems, and are guided by outdated legal mandates (e.g. Public Land Act of 1936 and Land Registration Act of 1902 / Property Registration Decree of 1978) that are not anymore attuned to present-day conditions of land administration in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the proposed Land Administration Reform Act hopes to provide the necessary foundation to jumpstart a long-delayed and oft-neglected but highly sensitive problems confronted by almost all Filipino citizens – ensuring the credibility and sanctity of the land they own;

WHEREAS, local government units (LGUs) are the key field managers of land resources for both public and private lands. While the DENR and LRA have specific mandates on the overall administration of public and private lands, LGUs exercise direct administration, preservation, utilization and allocation of land uses and resources at the local levels. In this regard, LGUs have a big stake in the effective and efficient management of land resources in their localities because a large part of the local revenues generated by LGUs to their localities come from real property taxes and land-related transactions such as the transfer taxes;

WHEREAS, a joint study by the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) and the National Tax Research Centre (NTRC) of the Department of Finance, reported that the period 2000-2003, that LGUs are losing some PhP 9.3 billion yearly due to poor collection efficiency of local property taxes. Among key reasons cited for the poor collection of RPT among LGUs are inefficient collection system, underrated values of assessed real properties as compared to real market values and local revenue transfers, particularly the yearly internal revenue allotments (IRA), because RPT collection which should be the main source of local revenues, is a mere 12.3% of the total revenues generated by LGUs;

WHEREAS, the proposed Land Administration Reform Act (LARA) aims to upgrade, systematize and integrate the administration, management and operations of the country's land resources in both public and private lands;

WHEREAS, the LARA bill also aims to improve, rationalize and systematize the land records, titling, documentation and information systems into an open, updated, and reliable systems improve the delivery of land related services to the general public and reduce delays in land document processing and releases, and, enhance and improve transparency and governance in the land resource and administration system but cutting down the overly bureaucratic, technically oriented land titling and registration processes in the system;

WHEREAS, the proposed bill does not presume to resolve all the detailed, complex and multi-dimensional problems pervading in the administration and management of the country's most critical yet finite land resources, the proposed Land Administration Reform Act of 2006 firmly hopes to provide the impetus to take the first critical and serious step to its solution and spur local and national economic development.

WHEREAS, some of the main features of the proposed Land Administration Reform Act are the following:

a) Integration of the functions, operations and systems of the DENR's Land Management Bureau and the Land Registration Authority into a single Land Administration Authority (LAA) under the Office of the President (OP) with provincial and city offices;

b) Establishment of regional, provincial and city-level Land Adjudication Boards (LAB) as quasi-judicial bodies that would resolve and address land related conflicts and cases such as overlapping titles, ownership disputes, transfers and exchanges;

c) Elevating the management and administration of land resources to the level of a Cabinet Secretary with portfolio that would be appointed by the President of the Philippines and confirmed by the Commission of Appointments;

d) Establishment of an 8-person multi-sectoral Stakeholders' Advisory Committee that shall assist the LAA in the formulation of policies on land administration and public land management and monitor its implementation;

e) Strengthen the administrative accountability and authority of the LAB to administratively address simple clerical and typographical errors in the issuance of plans, maps and titles;

f) Strengthen fiscal autonomy and eliminate graft and corruption in the land administration sector by allowing the LAA to use its income to support its operations and projects, including increases in salaries and provision of incentives to LAA personnel.

THEREFORE RESOLVE AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the General Assembly of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines that the proposed Land Administration Reform Act of 2006 be urgently and readily passed into law by the Senate and House of Representatives during the 13th Congress so that future generations of Filipinos will not have to suffer the negligence and distress suffered by our parents and ancestors.

RESOLVED AND APPROVED, by the General Assembly of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines on 25 October 2006, at The Manila Hotel, One Manila, Philippines.

HON. RAMON N. GUICO JR
National President
League of Municipalities of the Philippines

HON. GERARDO CALDERON
Secretary General
League of Municipalities of the Philippines

PASS LARA NOW!

Mystic prepares world for Christ's 2nd coming

By message A1

When was it about the religious gathering that made it such a success are reveal for the relatively few cynics not to the rule?

Was Jesus Christ appeared Sunday, Jesus had instead 'Name,' the self-effacing dwarf lay apostle of the new Jesus Christ, the Servicing King Movement, to speak to Filipino devotees for the first time.

The movement seeks to do nothing less than prepare the world for Christ's Second Coming.

Some people may scoff at the importance of such an epiphany, after all, the Savior's return has been predicted since time immemorial by all sorts of alleged visionaries and messiahs claiming to be.

What made 'Jesus' different?

That key question was answered in the moment the visionary began her talk at the PICC. He placed those with a childlike openness that numbed her own.

It was therefore a special privilege for us to listen to Jesus as she spoke about the "reverse mission" of Jesus Christ, the Returning Lord who, unlike the first time, will come to earth not with a sign of faith, a magician summon that stilled all possible doubts, but with the message of obedience into a new era of obedience that would change and redeem the world.

Sr. Faustina, Pope John Paul II

Mother Jesus showed Her intended audience that in the next 50 years or so, he had been following repeated messages from God all over the world.

He recalled that after Fatima, Sister Jesus Maria Faustina showed messages about Jesus coming back as the King of Divine Mercy before judging his mankind. Christ also told her that he would choose another holy person in Poland to similarly prepare for His return on earth.

That enough, after he became Pope, John Paul II proclaimed the Sun Advent of Christ in the year 2000.

But went on to say that the book has now been passed to him, who showed with John Paul I (I personal message that had received from Jesus in 2004, a year before the Pope II died.

John Paul showed the new apostolate and the mission that contained Christ's blessings for Our Time.

Her disconcerted Christ's imminent second coming to the present event since the birth of Jesus. And he urged those to attendance in Jesus cloud's to what were fact to us, because she was "a messenger from heaven who will change our lives."

Anonymity

"Name" is not the visionary's real name. The only phone we have way of her but for Solitaire blurred because she seeks to do her all-important work in anonymity, as requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The visionary is a wife and mother of six children who for several years has been receiving interior locutions not from Jesus but also from Mary and a number of saints.

The messages are intended to prepare Christ's coming mission in the world, a great renewal that seeks to make many other lay apostles to help propagate it—hence Name's first visit to the Philippines, where committed devotees abound.

But even telling I had heard and read about Jesus and Christ's service mission, Jesus's need and soulmate when the visionary started her talk.

The "never from heaven" then she proceeded to share was more than good, it was exultant!

Renewal

Reverently, she shared: "Christ's plan includes each one of you. The great renewal has already begun, but we don't know when it will culminate. So, you have to be alert to what God wills for you to do. He wouldn't use it, instead, we should embrace it because it will be a wonderful time for us and for our children.

"We are in the time of transition. Nothing will stop or delay the renewal, because Christ will do it.

"But Jesus wants us to be His lay apostles to make of the world a garden, and not a pile of ruins.

"How do we accomplish this? Be sure one of us making you and a garden for Jesus. Be Himself told me, 'The world is in darkness, and I want to illuminate it with My light—one soul at a time.'

"As Christ's lay apostles in His reverse mission, we will know God's joy—that He accepts us. And I can vouch for it, because it has happened in my own life.

"I made so many mistakes when I was young. At only 20, I already had a child and I had gotten divorced. Only later did I reach out for Jesus, and He showered and saved me with His love and forgiveness."

'I am with you'

Jesus said Jesus had to teach her: "Every time I started wavering into her insecurities, I didn't realize how what he had to do there, as Jesus had to teach me over and over again, until I learned to believe Him when He said to me [and to all of us], 'I am with you—I will never leave you!'

"Think about it. Jesus died by us, so we can be His sons of love. Divinity and gratitude for him. And, let me assure you, the rejoice in this thinking and heaven also rejoices. That's why that it's great day for us—and it's a great day to heaven, too!

"To help Jesus transform the world from disobedience to obedience—that seems to be a monumental, even impossible, task. But He says it can be accomplished, if each one of us intercedes to help Him.

"We should ask ourselves: 'What is one way I can be better today?'—it's that simple.

"We should never forget that our most important mission is unity with Jesus Christ! We can only ask Jesus, 'What do you want me to get rid of—and what do I need more of?'

"In let Christ into our lives, we must be silent and simple...no, avoid noise and hectic, distracting activities. Time to dote devotion—of moderation, in this age of disobedience, we have a lot of unexpected vocations, and that's only to pray.

"You may ask, what is my vocation, how do I determine it? The answer is simple. Pray to Jesus to show yourself—to do it the best way possible, to honor God!

"And always remember, Your vocation is your way home to heaven! Understand that life on earth is temporary, so focus on receiving to your eternal one!"

Ultimate destination

Name's first talk ended on that high, inspiring note, and her captivated audience rewarded her with an extended ovation. Christ-in-training she accepted it serenely but humbly.

Later in the day, she delivered a second talk, this time focusing on the "four" of heaven and purgatory that Christ Himself took her on, to give other people a clearer picture of their ultimate destination.

But before that, Jesus told would-be lay apostles of Christ: "Receive each day's cut found on how you feel. Don't base your decisions on your feelings. And, don't let the world take your peace—give your peace to others, don't worry, because Jesus is the soul of generosity. He'll fill you up again."

Jesus also stressed the importance of confession, describing it as God's beautiful gift of mercy and forgiveness to us that we can open only at the confessional. She distinctly emphasized the need for us to love and support our priests.

As for going home to heaven, she said, seems difficult in this age of sin and pride. Jesus warned her listeners: "Jesus is easier on us than we are on ourselves, because He loves and understands us completely, and because is only our legacy from God!

"Because it is for being with Jesus, with no separation for all eternity! I saw this when He took me there. I experienced His perfect acceptance of me. And I understood that, aside from being a mystic place, heaven is a state of soul—it has to with us, with us, makes we regret this. And that state is hell, or purgatory.

"In a sense, heaven looks a little like this world, with a city, trees, a river, buildings, a valley, and music all around. The big difference is, we are in heaven, we are filled with love! And God loves everyone individually as only He can, as the poem each one there

PHOTO ILLUMED: Lay apostle "Name" (center) shares not-so-her favorite public, soldier her face-to-her-real name. She works for the Returning King Movement in anonymity, as requested, she says, by the Virgin Mary.

experiences is complete."

Consolation

Anne went on to say that, in heaven, she met her own mother who died when she was young.

She was moved, she said, when her mother whispered, "I never left you. I have always been with you!"

She said this was true for everyone with a departed beloved, and this taught was a great consolation to her listeners.

Also consoling were Anne's subsequent insights. "God does not 'need' us, but invites us to serve. His zeal help each other, and ultimately us with a feeling of great joy.

"There may be billions of souls, but God pays attention to each one of us. He knows our souls, our prayers...He is always paying attention! Each one of us is cherished. Do look into the eyes of God the Father, every prayer I had uttered was in this gaze—that's how completely connected He was to me.

"In heaven, too, I reminded His Lord's Passion. And the joy of the Resurrection is available to everyone there.

"And, all the time I was there, I was being reminded: 'You are a child of God, so you have every right to be in heaven...it is your eternal inheritance, and it 'looks' you with great dignity!"

Hopeful, not dismal

And purgatory?

Anne described it as a place enveloped in a thick mist or fog, but the effect was hopeful instead. Although "purgatory is a merciful place where we go to accept ourselves. The pain of purgatory is remorse. But it's a good place, as none be afraid of purgatory. It's God's mercy!

In hell, however, souls are caught in pouring on each other—is they did in life. Where a soul rejects Christ, it also rejects all of us. But, our consolation is, in the economy of death, most souls, even the most hardened ones, will choose Christ."

The visionary concluded her account of her visit to heaven by sharing her conversations with Mary, who urged all souls to remember: "God loves you!"

Anne told Mary up in our prayer role model, who never appointed her will from God's.

She also stressed the restorative power of sin, and described abortion as "the Enemy's fiercest rage against God."

In conclusion, Jesus said: "If you say yes to Jesus now and become His worse ministry lay apostles, special graces will be bestowed on you, because He wants to entrust you."

"Don't fear that you aren't worthy—throughout religious history, God has chosen the unworthy to spread His word! So, no more excuses: God loves you the way you are!"

Knowing peace

Finally, Christ, through Anne, spoke on His lay apostles: "Your mission is to seek peace constant. Wherever each soul is the course station. Not noticed that...but as you journey yourselves with My interests, I will convert Myself with you.

"You will be placed in my sacred Heart and I will defend and protect you. I will free parties the complete conversion of souls of their loved ones.

"So you see, the souls who serve in this reverse mission in My beloved lay apostles will know peace. The world cannot make this promise as only heaven also knows peace on a soul. The Holy Sacred ministry, and I will every one of heaven's children to assist me. You will be well rewarded. My dear ones!"

Interested readers may access more information at www.divinemissionpilgrimage.com. The apostolate also includes spiritual practices like the morning offering and collegiate prayer; one hour of eucharistic adoration each week; participation in a monthly prayer group; monthly confession; and following the examples of Jesus Christ as set forth in Holy Scripture.

US Embassy closed on Dec. 1

THE US EMBASSY IN MANILA YESterday announced that it will be closed on Dec. 1, which Wednesday has declared a holiday in observance of Bonifacio Day.

Nonimmigrant visa applicants whose interview appointments were scheduled on Dec. 1 should instead come to the embassy on Thursday, Nov. 30, the mission said. Their appointment time will be the same as that earlier set for Dec. 1.

Applicants who are unable to attend an appointment on Nov. 30 may reschedule their interview by calling 1-900-101-7876. This toll center is accessible only within the Philippines through a PLDT or Smart landline.

Those who had scheduled their appointment using Readiness may reschedule on-line not later than Nov. 27. Visa-first.com be accessed through the Embassy's Website at http://cpdelippines.usembassy.gov.

THE WINNERS pose with Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

3 school divisions clinch P10-M Microsoft grants

THE MALOLOS (BANGUED FOR OUTSTANDING) division of the Department of Education that have successfully integrated information and communication technology (ICT) in student teaching and learning curriculum has sealed with the announcement of the winners of Microsoft Philippines' Partners in Learning (PiL) awards, called Pinnacle, finishing the 21st century school system.

Topping were 106 winners all over the Philippines, the divisions of Muntinlupa, Cebu Province and Digos emerged as the winners of Diamond. Each division will be awarded with training and technology grants totalling nearly P10 million.

"Congratulations Microsoft Philippines, the participating divisions, and of course, the top three finalists, for the successful implementation of the awards," said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus. "The role that ICT plays in powering the economic development of the nation is very evident. By integrating ICT, starting in the education of young Filipinos, we are developing skilled and globally competitive individuals who will form the future Philippine workforce."

He added that the department encouraged the divisions to participate in the search because part of the curriculum for improving the delivery of education services is bringing down the planning and developing of educational policies to the divisions and communities level. With Pinnacle, the initiative and desire to improve the school system comes from the schools and divisions themselves as the process of considering the continuing and gathering the materials for documentation depended entirely on the commitments of the divisions.

Microsoft Philippines Partners in Learning is an initiative to provide schools and students access to information and communications technology (ICT) based learning solutions to help them develop problem-solving knowledge that will boost their competence and skills, enabling them to realize their full potential.

As part of PiL, Pinnacle aims to recognize the most innovative schools and divisions that are also open to technology and driven to empower people, to celebrate, share and encourage the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process in the division.

Pinoy workers coming home from Kazakhstan

A TOTAL OF 326 FILIPINO workers would be repatriated from Kazakhstan this week after riots at an oil field run jointly by US oil major Chevron and the Kazak government, the foreign affairs department said yesterday.

The first batch of workers were to arrive Thursday on a commercial flight, while the rest were to fly in at the weekend, the department said.

A Filipino labor attache would remain in the area until the last of the 326 Filipinos had left, it said.

The 326 are among the nearly 800 Filipinos placed under protection after violent clashes between Kazakh and Turkish workers at the oil field in Tengiz, western Kazakhstan, last month.

Filipino diplomats said threats were issued in the writing, although no Filipinos were involved.

The Tengiz field, run by Tengizchevroil, is among the three biggest energy projects being developed with foreign partners in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan.

The oldest of the three, it supplies oil to the West via a pipeline through Russia, and has been in-talked to a major expansion project in recent years.

An estimated eight million Filipinos or nearly 10 percent of the population are employed abroad, sending home millions of dollars annually and helping to keep the Philippine economy afloat. AFP

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How to care for the elderly

RACHY ARENAZA, a nongovernment organization official advocating Filipino families in caring for their elderly loved ones, is holding a lecture on Nov. 25, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Jansen Hall of the Claret, the King Seminary on E. Rodriguez Blvd. Ext., Quezon City.

The main speaker is Prof. Lydia Manlapaz of the University of the Philippines Diliman.

According to Arenaza, Matanda (grandma and founder Adele Joaquin, the primary caregiver of her studies who is inflicted with senile dementia, caring for the elderly requires not just physical presence but also attention, a working knowledge of proper care and comfort, and a "servant heart."

Unfortunately, there are many caregivers who do not know how, or are not properly trained, to handle such situations, she said.

Joaquin also said the forum sought to address the lack of education in caring for elderly family members.

For inquiries, call 373-22-62 or 0917-416-78-98.

SAMSUNG

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Temporary water interruption in San Juan and Mandaluyong needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is currently upgrading its distribution lines and facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we will have to temporarily interrupt water supply in portions of San Juan and Mandaluyong City starting 8:00 p.m., Thursday, November 23, 2006, up to 4:00 a.m., Friday, November 24, due to the interconnection of mainlines. The following areas will be affected: Barangays Corazon De Jesus, Pasadena, P. Cruz, Halo, Tibagan, Sta. Lucia in San Juan and Barangays Kabayanan and Maytunas in Mandaluyong City.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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COMPENSATION ACT

Pay hike for state professionals seen

STATE PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS TEACHERS, doctors and engineers will get considerable increases in their salaries once the proposed Government Classification and Compensation Act (GCA) of 2006 is approved by Congress, according to the Civil Service Commission.

"The bottom line of this bill is that, more than any other sector in the government, it addresses the needs of government professionals upon whose shoulders a huge accountability for governmental tasks. They are not government teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, social workers, accountants, engineers—professionals who are doing frontline service, like going around counting ang pang," said CSC Chairman Conrado Limpot.

David said those in the lower level would get the full amount of increases (mainly) **only next year or within two years, while increases of those in the higher level would** be given on staggered basis over a four-year period.

2-year study

David added it was about time that salaries be updated commensurate to the value of work and accountability. The increases in salaries are based on comparable factors that include skills and knowledge, nature of work, and answerability.

The proposed GCA is a result of a two-year rigorous study done in close consultation with the Department of Budget and Management on the existing compensation systems in government and those in the private sector and in other countries.

At present, most of government professionals belong to the middle-level salary range which, if placed against **nationwide private firms, is 40 percent below the** market.

David said the proposed increases in the GCA would narrow the gap in market rates from 40 percent to about 9 percent in the middle level.

To illustrate, the CSC chief cited, the teacher position whose entry-level basic salary is currently pegged at approximately P6,980. This, she explained, is meager pay considering the laborious nature of work, the skills and knowledge required, and the answerability of being a teacher. Under the proposed GCA, a teacher at entry level would get an estimated P16,000 base pay.

David pointed out that the GCA would try to comprehensively address all the disparities, disparities, and inequities plaguing the government's present compensation systems. For one, comparable positions across the bureaucracy would get the same pay on the same comparable factors taken into account.

Below market rate

The proposed bill would likewise make government wages comparable with those **in non-government firms. This is especially** so in the middle and top levels—which, at present, are pathetically below market rates by 40 percent and 74 percent, respectively, she said.

David also said the GCA would ensure that salaries in government are totally based on performance, giving due credence to better performers. She clarified that longevity will no longer be part of salary but would still be compensated.

British Embassy to hold seminar on energy Dec. 5

THE BRITISH EMBASSY will hold a roundtable discussion/seminar on Dec. 5 at Manduriao General Manila to contribute towards facilitating the implementation of sustainable energy projects in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

Entitled "Sustainable Energy for Prosperity Sustainable Energy Projects in Southeast Asia," the seminar aims to identify key challenges in the energy sector, propose how current perspectives, specific and innovative responses and actual experiences highlighting factors affecting successful implementation will also be discussed.

A delegation from the UK Department of Trade and Investment's (UKTI) Climate Change Project Office and the UKTI's British Hydrogen Association will also be in town for the seminar and the Philippine Energy Week Events.

The seminar coincides with the 10th ASEAN Power Utilities/Authorities Conference and is being initiated by the Center of Excellence for Sustainable Energy in Southeast Asia (CSEE), headed by the UK DTI and the World Energy Council.

The lineup of speakers includes national and international experts in the field of energy finance and project development. Participants who will benefit from this event come from those involved in all aspects of the cycle of energy project development, the policymakers, government agencies, financiers, project developers and other stakeholders in the energy community.

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VICE PRESIDENT Noli de Castro with Bayanihan Chair Marita Prieto and Executive Vice President Dave Valdes at the Bayanihan Job Expo.

Gov't still working hard for 1M jobs a year—Noli

THE GOVERNMENT IS WORKING hard to meet its goal of creating one million jobs a year, according to Vice President Noli de Castro, at the opening of the Bayanihan Job Market Employment Expo last Monday.

The job expo was formally opened by, for Castro, Secretary Jesli Marisol Prieto and Director Nilda Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) regional director.

The Secretary's Job Market regularly organizes expos for local and overseas employment markets.

This month's job expo, the fourth and last this year, runs until today at the Robinson's Activity Center at the Ayala Commercial Center in Makati City.

It is sponsored by GMA Network, ETBB, QTV, Phoenix Fire and Asep 92.3.

Participating companies are: Accenture, Advanced Contact Solutions, Abaxal Professional Network, ABS Group of Companies, Architecto Solutions, ADNC, ClientLogic, Convergys, Deutsche Knowledge Services, eBusiness Contact Center, eFLUY Versus, eMercury, Hi-BC, IBM Dalsdi, ICT Group, International Healthcare Trends, Intermatrix, Jobs Clements, Lisa Group of Companies, LinkEmpower, Logicell, Magnum Business Corp., Marie France Group of Companies, MCO Group, People Support, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, PJ Distiller, Safeway Philtech Inc., Sitel Contact Solutions, Security Bank, Shell Philippines, Stardent USA, Sterchem and Staffers, SPI, St. Peter Life Plan, Sykes, Teleperformance, Teletech, Thomson Financial, UNICCorp., Vmore Contact Services.

RP campaign a rallying point for int'l breast milk advocates

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHY DOES THE WORLD CARE ABOUT THE Philippines' campaign against giant, multinational, milk companies?

Boston volunteer happens to the country's breastfeeding campaign would most likely happen to the progress of Third World countries.

"They are on as a rallying point," explained Inez Fernandez, executive director of the lactation milk advocacy group Save.

She said the other countries were looking up to Filipinos, wondering whether the local Milk Code could withstand the onslaught of multinational, infant formula companies.

Luce had come up with a similar scenario and was also being "pressured" by big business, she said.

Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia were pointed to as countries that were Milk Codes and were forcing for a tough battle with milk companies, she added.

"The Asian market is really very big and because that's why milk companies are counting on much pressure," she told the business group. "They want to make a success here that pressure breastfeeding."

Big issue

The August letter of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America to President Macapagal-Arroyo was such a big issue that breastfeeding advocates from around the world rallied behind the Philippines.

In fact, an international forum of academicians, doctors, writers and development specialists in Sweden cackled the "interference" by the US chamber.

The business group came under fire after warning his letter about "the risk to the reputation of the Philippines as a viable and viable destination for investment" if the did not "re-examine" the revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Milk Code (Executive Order No. 51).

The code regulates the marketing of infant formulas and requires companies to put labels warning of the possible contamination of their products with bacteria.

"We publicly publicize and denounce the interference by the US Chamber of Commerce and request our support for the Implementing Rules and Regulations issued by the Department of Health," the participants said in a statement posted at the website of the International Baby Food Action Network.

"We call upon the business sector in the US and in Manila to exercise restraint and also to call upon various arms of the government of the Philippines—judiciary, executive and legislature—to carry out their duties independently and without fear or favor so as to fulfill the right of the children of the Philippines to the best attainable standard of health."

Potential hazard

Citing World Health Organization and Unicef positions, the participants noted that the "use of infant formula is indeed a potential hazard to infant health, and that promotion of such foods undermines breastfeeding, putting health at risk."

In a briefing paper to read before Congress last February, Dr. Jean Marc Olive, WHO country representative warned that babies who were not breastfed were 25 times more likely to die of diarrhoea, 3.6 times more likely to die of pneumonia, and 2.5 times more likely to suffer from otitis infections.

Several international findings have also warned about the possible presence of "Enterobacter sakazakii" and "salmonella" in some infant milk formulas. Thus, the Milk Code requirements on label warnings.

E. sakazakii has been linked to sepsis and meningitis while salmonella is a common cause of food poisoning.

"Everybody should remember that we are in an emergency health situation here," Fernandez said.

"The battle is also economics.

In the briefing paper, Olive told lawmakers that Filipinos spend around P21.3 billion annually to purchase infant formula products.

He said 950,000 or 38 percent of infants used milk substitutes. Of the number of users, 25 percent were poor, he noted.

Advocates like Fernandez believe buying milk substitutes is not economically expedient, since breast milk provides everything a baby needs from birth until the age of 2.

Cops break up protest-rally for Nicole

ANTIRIOT POLICE push against members of Bayan and Gabriela during yesterday's rally for rape complainant "Nicole" near the US Embassy. The protesters were camp close to the embassy. AP/JOJO

By Marguee C. Ortiz

AROUND 100 MILITANT YOUTH had hoped to stage a demonstration in front of the US Embassy to support of "Nicole" who was allegedly raped by US Marines in Subic last year.

They were, however, prevented from even setting foot on Roxas Boulevard.

The women were pushed away by a group of anti-riot policemen, according to Cebu Bayan of the women's group Gabriela.

"It was really weird because instead of supporting us in the upcoming promulgation of the Subic rape case, the government continued to use force in harassing us," Bayan said.

After they had their brief march to the US Embassy at 10:30 a.m. but were only able to reach H.V. dela Fuente Street, where Gabriela was led to protest A cheerup.

Members of the Manila Police District (MPD) Civil Disturbance Management (CDM) unit arrived and told the group to leave he area.

"Some of our members were hurt by the water cannons and shields while we were being pushed toward Nakpil Street," Bayan said, adding that they held the remainder of their program near the Redwood Library.

Like a prostitute

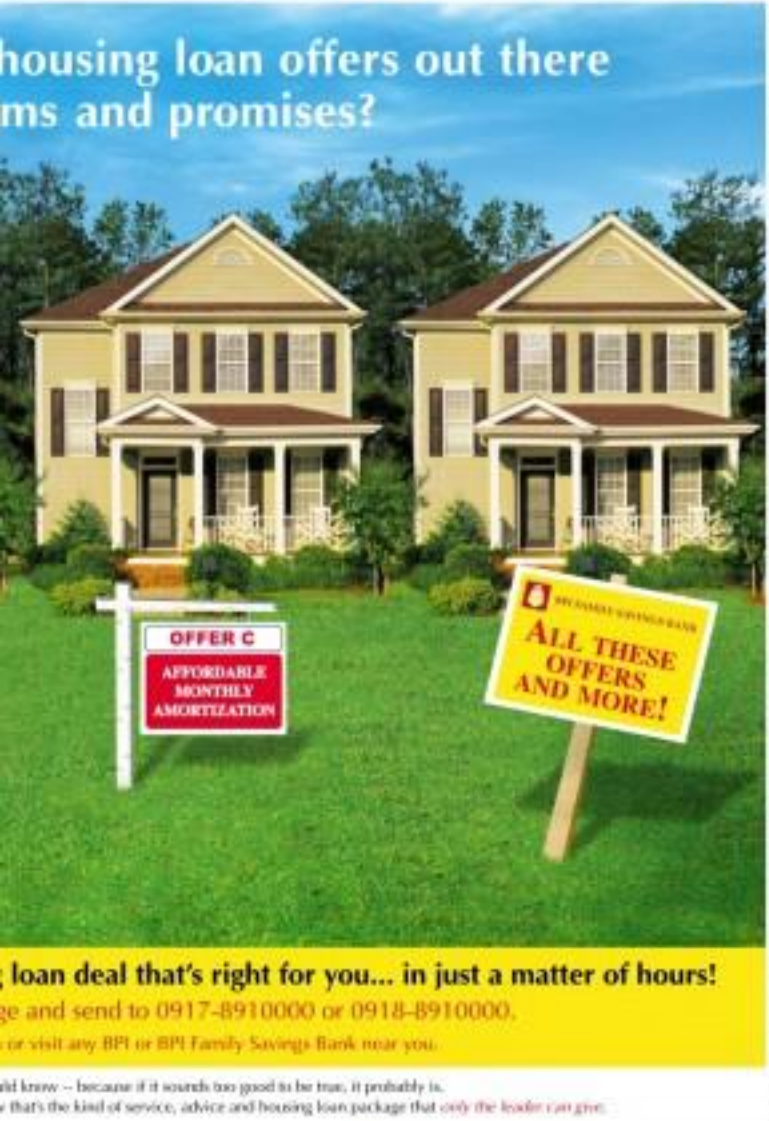
An MIO COM executive clarified that they had been ordered to close the area for security purposes. President Macapagal-Arroyo was scheduled to pass Roxas Boulevard at around the same time as the militant rally.

In a statement, Gabriela Secretary-General Emmi de Jesus said the US government had been treating the Philippines "like a prostituted woman who would service their every need despite the Filipino people's outcry."

She added: "The US governmental relationship does not close policies—subjugating the Filipino people economically, politically and even culturally—under the guise of treaties, pacts, friendship and cooperation—to the detriment and ire of the Filipino people. These policies, treaties and cooperation have led to the destruction of the Filipino people. Filipino women becoming modern-day slaves—'commodified' and displaced as just like Nicole."

De Jesus also said the verdict, which will be handed down by a Makati Court on Nov. 27, was not the end of the Subic rape case.

"Nicole, who was raped by US military personnel under the Visiting Forces Agreement, is yet another victim of the US government still seeking justice. Despite this, more Americans are getting away scot-free and go while Nicole awaits retribution," she said.



Surigao road project probed

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN is looking into an allegedly anomalous awarding of a contract to build a major road project in Mindanao under President Macapagal-Arroyo's super region development program.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said she has received a detailed report of allegedly anomalous bidding for the construction of the Surigao-Davao Coastal Road Project under the Department of Public Works and Highways' National Road Improvement and Management Project.

The P1.17-billion road improvement project covers the improvement of the 73.31-km Hinatuan-Bayabo and Tagbina-Bunawan-Bislig sections of the Surigao-Davao Coastal Road, which is part of the Surigao del Sur Highway.

Gutierrez cited reports that the local and foreign companies which participated in the bidding for a portion of the Surigao-Davao Coastal Road Project manipulated the process to ensure that the contract will be awarded among the contractors.

She, however, did not divulge any more details on the alleged anomaly, saying simply that the Ombudsman would follow Malacañang's directive to keep corruption out of foreign-funded projects.

The road project will be funded by the World Bank, which grants loans to developing countries to finance poverty reduction efforts, delivery of social services, protection of the environment and promotion of economic growth.

An Asian Development Bank report had stated that "many opinion leaders think that corruption cuts into foreign investment levels and produces substandard roads."

Gutierrez said this kind of practice results in wastage of foreign assistance funds, which were granted to benefit the people like the residents of Surigao del Sur who have been waiting for the project for decades to develop their area.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Overdue reform

THE BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE OF Congress has approved the final draft of a new law that would provide for a fixed, three-year term for the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The proposed law would also institute a minimum two-year term for major service commanders. Furthermore, only the officers who have reached the rank of major general or rear admiral will qualify for the AFP's top post (at present, even colonels are eligible).

EDITORIAL

The three-year term is in keeping with the Constitution, which states that no chief of staff can serve beyond three years unless extended by the President. What the proposed legislation institutes as policy is that any appointee to the position of chief of staff would be guaranteed a full three-year stint at the job.

"The proposed law provides that the chief of staff will serve a fixed term of three years regardless of the mandatory (retirement) age of 56, meaning a chief of staff appointed to the position may serve in order to complete his term of office and beyond his retirement age," says Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security. The new law won't apply to the incumbent AFP chief of staff or the present heads of the three major service commands. The proposed law would take effect when the terms of the incumbents officers end.

It's about time such a law was passed, and we hope it will be swiftly enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo. The "revolving-door policy" of appointing chiefs of staff to serve out the remaining months of their military careers has been harmful to the military service and reduces the position to being just another patronage scheme. The comings and goings of the top brass have been particularly dizzying under the present administration.

Considering that the May elections next year represent an opportunity for the AFP to conduct itself professionally, and without fear or favor, in safeguarding the polls, a credible leadership in place for the AFP would go far to reduce political tensions. We would even counsel the current service commanders and the AFP chief of staff to render their resignations the moment the proposed law is signed, in order to facilitate the institutionalization of this new policy. But this might be too much to ask.

The proposed law will not guarantee, of course, that the AFP will be more professionally or even competently led, but at least it ensures that presidents will put more thought into senior military appointments, because of the fixed terms involved. The jockeying among officers for a final gamish to their military salad will also, it is hoped, be reduced, as any person aspiring to a major service command or the AFP top job will have to serve—and produce results—during his term.

Since the proposed legislation is poised to become law, we won't quibble with it, but another piece of legislation should be considered. That's the proposal for the position of commandant of the Philippine Military Academy to be given a fixed term as well.

If the laudable purpose of providing a fixed term for the top AFP positions is to further insulate the Armed Forces from politics—and politicking—so that presidents and flag officers will stop viewing the positions as patronage plums, then the PMA commandant's job deserves the same institutional protection. Considering that the officer corps often receives a generation stamp according to how each PMA class conducts itself and strives to solidify ranks, the commandant's job can have a profound influence on the future of the AFP.

The family of Gen. Vicente Lim, which retains affectionate ties to the AFP, has long lobbied for this reform. Civilian institutions of learning—and here we forget, the PMA is an institution of learning—have fixed terms for university and college presidents as a matter of course. The PMA should have the same policy at hand. And while it is a essentially civilian institution, the Philippine National Police (and its excellency) should embark on educating similar legislators for itself.

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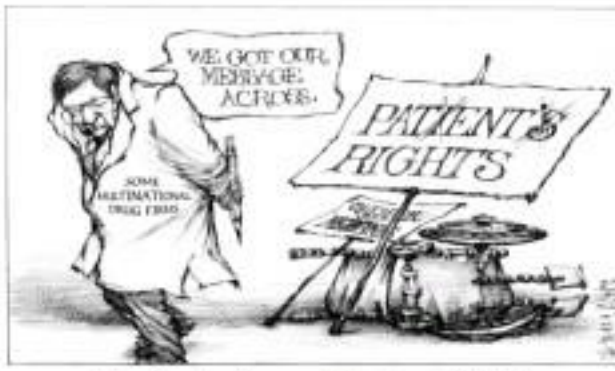

Cha-cha backers still up to old tricks

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE BACKERS OF THE PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE for Charter change are still up to their old dirty tricks, after being rebuked by the Supreme Court for the "grand deception" and "gigantic fraud" that they tried to foist on the people to be able to gather enough signatures to enable them to embark on the "constitutional revolution" thrust and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) filed a motion for reconsideration. But old habits die hard. Still bent on cricking lawyer Emil Lumbres of Ilagan mailed his motion from Pangasinan while the bad Cory days Assemblyman Ulap president mailed his document from Tuguegarao.

By mailing their motions from two faraway provinces instead of directly submitting them at the receiving office of the tribunal in Manila (Ilagan and Ulap have offices in Metro Manila), they hope to delay the process for the Court's final resolution of the case. The writ is to prevent the tribunal from deciding on the motion for reconsideration before Chief Justice Antonio Puno goes to Malacañang to sign the petition. Pangasinan voted against the Ilagan-Ulap petition which was defeated by an 8-7 vote of the justices. (There was no need for the appointment of a new chief justice who, they hope or expect, will be sympathetic and will vote in their favor and thus overturn the original adverse decision.

Under the rules, a motion for reconsideration is deemed officially submitted to the Court on the day it is mailed and postmarked by the postal office, even on the very day of the deadline of such filing. Considering the number of days the mail will travel from Bohol and Pangasinan to Manila, the time to decide on the case will be delayed by that many days. By that time, there may be a new chief justice who, they hope or expect, will be sympathetic and will vote in their favor and thus overturn the original adverse decision.

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The senators, however, laughed at this new attempt at trickery as well as the motion of a new organization called Sulong Sagupa (meaning "forward" in Ilocano) that also filed a motion for Pangasinan and Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who was the ponente of the decision adverse to Ilagan-Ulap, to inhibit themselves from deliberating and deciding on the motion for reconsideration.

The amateur artistry or maneuvering by Ilagan, Ulap and the Sarmiyo administration will make the Supreme Court turn around so much in fact, 23 verdict," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

"This is a funny move," Pimentel told the Inquirer on Subic. "The motion is addressed to people who inside the decision which is now being sought to be reconsidered. How they went to inhibit them."

Inhibitor Jesus argued in the petition that Pangasinan and Carpio would not rule fairly on the motion for reconsideration because of their alleged close ties to the Ilagan-Ulap petition.

"It's a cheap effort," said Sen. Richard Gordon. "The call is out of desperation, is desperate ridiculous and should be thrown out. They might as well ask all eight justices who voted to dismiss [their petition] to inhibit themselves as well."

But apparently the cha-cha backers believe they need only one vote to reverse the Supreme Court decision. So if Pangasinan and Carpio would inhibit themselves, the vote would change to 7-6 in favor of the Ilagan-Ulap petition. Adding Puno, if Pangasinan is replaced by a chief justice sympathetic to Charter change, the vote would change to 8-7 in favor of the petitioners.

But with all the trickery and the contempt for the people's intelligence by the cha-cha backers, can we trust them with changing our Constitution? They did not hesitate to fool the people on the people's initiative, and now they're using cheap tricks to delay the decision on the motion for reconsideration to wear for a change in the composition of the Court, so pro-ass was justices from voting on the motion. Isn't that enough reason to write him to the Cha-cha movement until a more trustworthy Congress or constitutional convention is convened? Amending or revising the Constitution is too important a matter and should not be left to people with selfish motives.

* * *

The latest victory of Manny Pacquiao moves him one step closer to the vice presidency post of Manila—if he decides to run in the May 2007 elections. He is being tempted to be this running mate of Alfredo Lim, son of Mayor Lito Atienza, in next year's elections.

But there's a hitch. Manny is a registered voter of General Santos City where he lives. To qualify to be a candidate in Manila, he has to file a registered voter there six months before the election, like to not yet registered as a voter of Manila. And it is barely six months to election time in May 2007. He may be one month short of the residency requirement.

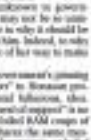
* * *

I have bad news and good news.

First, the bad news: There will be no SVM awards for the Shot Story this year. The judges decided no story deserved any award.

Now the good news: The awards day of next year SVM Award winners will be published early next year. And the prizes for winning does not, this next year may be bigger. The prizes not awarded this year will be added to next year's prizes. And writers need no longer submit official entries. All short stories published in national magazines and even school publications will be considered for the awards. If you come across a short story in a Philippine publication which you think is good enough to be considered for the SVM Awards, you may alert the secretariat about it. But if you have a call on, the secretariat may not even think a good enough, you may send copies to the secretariat. We will publish the address and telephone numbers of the secretariat as well as reminders later.

Run him, he'll win



There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE TEXT MESSAGES CAME FAST AND furious mid-week last week: Gringo Honasan had been caught. One or two even called up to tell me about it. My reaction was: "Yes, so?"

Of course, I sympathize with Honasan for the injuries he got while trying to escape the pursuers, especially to the, well, colorful circumstances that he did. It would have made for a nice scene in an action movie, or a comedy of the titillating kind. I recall again the ordeal of Colonel Balao who got pinched by security officers in the dead of night just as he was about to flee. Many during the dark days of martial law fit got tagged in a spot where the presidents had hung out their clothes to dry and his hands were bound by clothesline rope. He was thereafter left standing before a wall with subwoofers. He wanted to say, "I was not hiding, sorry, I was avoiding arrest!" But he thought prudence was the better part of valor, silence the better part of wit.

But I digress. Frankly, I don't know why Honasan was hiding. Even more frankly, I don't know why he was being sought out by the authorities. That's what happened too after the Oakwood mutiny. Every time something like that happens, the name to be linked to it is usually Honasan's, or of Claude Rainer Honasan for us "Cocolisters". "Round up the usual suspects."

Honasan is the enemy that was never seen, it was still adventurism. I've asked around about the February "withdrawal of support," and most of those I've talked to say the military, politics there was largely marginal. I did ask some of the Magdalo officers last year here in Montreal Honasan was with them, and they told me that although they regarded him as an "asset," as indeed they did, many of the RAM leaders, and as indeed they did the military officers whose separation for rules and accountability preceded them—Ariel Querubin and Alexander Balutan chief of them—they were not exactly their biggest fan or partisan.

Of course, he didn't mind being branded about as the mastermind, physical or spiritual, of military misadventure. He may have been the source of some of the rumors himself. Well, there's as much a prize to pay for notoriety as there's to pay for glory, I'm sure.

None of this can be unknown to government, whose intelligence may not be to unintelligent. Which brings me to why it should be an exercise in trying to nab him. Indeed, to why it should be a waste of time to use of her way to make a big thing of his arrest.

My theory is that the government's pinning the "withdrawal of support" to Honasan guarantees one self-serving and hilarious thing. Namely, that the "withdrawal of support" is no better or worse than the failed RAM coups of the past. The logic is: It shares the same mechanistic spirit, or sense of adventurism, or belief that a few bold souls from the military could rescue the country from its ills. It shares the same pro-country-from-ills ideology that only Honasan pro-ass journalists as well, the coup plotters being poised to take over the country and run it themselves.

Nothing can be further from the truth. The February "withdrawal of support" was like the RAM coups of the past only in the sense they that oil spill off the shores of Guimaras is like the garbage collecting on the seawall of the Manila Bay. It is a grotesque comparison. So, it is a gross distortion. The opposite is closer to truth.

Unlike the RAM coups of the past, the February withdrawal had some of the most respectable names in the military in charge of the country. The fact that Defense Secretary is being accused of rebellion, along with Eliseo Odoro and many others, is proof of it. Its generals were not ambitious, the coup, had it succeeded, would have put up a transitional civilian government in its place. The old RAM coups, had they succeeded, would have put RAM governments in place of Cory's.

Unlike the RAM coups of the past, the February "withdrawal of support" was not a coup in the traditional sense, it was an extension of people power. It did not rely on a few individuals to carry it out, it relied on the nation to do it. If it were a coup, it would have been the most ingenious coup in the world, in every sense of the word "popular." Hell, it was as openly-advertised they even tried to get Gerardo Gonzalez Sengco and Ramon Magsaysay Jr. to join the coup. Which is, in every sense of the word too, happened well before, unveiled by GMA with the help of Gonzi.

By assigning Honasan a key role in the February revolt, or indeed the role of its mastermind, the government hopes to enshrine it in just another episode in the never-ending series of military adventurism, it runs of hasty mutinies trying to bring down a duly constituted government. The line is wrong on both counts.

Honasan, however, may console himself with one thing. Like it is getting clear, Inquirer, misinformed pro-campaign advertising. If he manages to run for senator next year—I don't know what fund-raiser can do to prevent him from doing so; forget homeless's fortune, but even billion-peso budgets to another organ up-stairs, way way upstairs...I have little doubt he will win. In fact, he may even top the field on the strength of his being depicted as GMA's foe. I variety, as would be destroyer. It will have to run that close to with a dubious pioneer's charisma or acceptability.

It will have everything to do with a false President's lack of them.

On many fronts

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

A WOMAN, UNBELIEVABLY DISTRAUGHT, came today to help which Mission, one of our secretary's staff members, was visiting a house in Payatas. It was her cousin who had committed suicide by drinking his insecticide in front of his family. Among the things the distraught woman found the husband lying on the floor of a hut beside three insecticide sprays, in the late stages of TB, his two children paralyzed from polio. The children, ages 4 and 6, were 3 to 4 years old, were coughing, already suffering from pneumonia complex.

Fortunately, it was possible to get him into the hospital, tuberculosis—fortunately also—he is still alive. Meanwhile, three of the children have already been enrolled in our feeding program and all four are being treated for pneumonia complex.

Ironically, the TB germ spreads like wildfire among poorly nourished children in overcrowded living conditions. 84 percent of the children in our feeding programs are infected with it and under treatment.

That is only one of the problems faced by these families, and perhaps the easiest most of all, in Payatas. There is the constant lack of money even for basic needs; the lack of jobs, inadequate schools, and an overall sense that one is shafted and in some cases intimidated backwards and abandoned families. Small wonder that when the women come together in small groups for prayer, Bible study and sharing sessions, the issues flow almost spontaneously. Even a brief perusal of the weekly interview 20 members of children in our feeding program as background for an article wanted to give up after hearing only four—the stories were so very heartbreaking.

And we are all in darkness and gloom. There are signs of life and hope. The summer of Sister Benedicta, a German Benedictine nun and nurse who spent 32 years in Payatas before being recalled to Germany is enshrined in the breath memories and that same comfort which the hush, and sense of God's presence which the Sisters of Mother Teresa's convent radiate but never the less one's inner need and dangerous concern of Payatas, finding people who

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are sick to come to the clinic (she would cry for them to do so or tag them to the hospital. The other need, more than the basic human one as an oasis of hope, and even more the health center which is by no medicine and ample work of medicine—still funded from elsewhere seems to be good nurse. Volunteer doctors, including one of her fellow Belgian religious has specialized on lung problems, and a together such local volunteers. Changes are substituted and adapted to the needs without of the patient.

The clinic itself is named after Fr. Joseph Dehon, the 19th century priest order was founded by a person to the people those suffered young. He had had a heart condition when he arrived and those years of tuberculosis work, traveling by horse mobility over the rutted roads, among his wandering little Masses chair, in different chapels before establishing his own church.

Less dramatic perhaps are the ongoing work. The parish care feeding programs for malnourished children, and a generous lady from Makati runs another one. Our own program is handling 160 children in person. But we given regular check-ups at the Pulilan Health Center and nutrition meets as needed (for primary complex, dewarming etc.), and receive a glass of milk and biscuits in mid-morning after a hot nutritious daily a week. The monitoring and cooking are done by the mothers, from volunteers, family, the logistics and can games and adventures for the children while the cooking is being done. We have even bought comfortables and toothpaste for them, and they are taught to use them after eating.

Looking forward also to a newly formed agency, Hamor has been coordinating with the Christian Council of the Philippines, from which the abnormal rains very good modules on nutrition which are are using in common education materials for the mothers—conducted with great success by Sister Benedicta.

The basic problem, of course is still poverty and joblessness. Aside from occasional livelihood seminars we are focusing on education, especially several reluctant relatives to motivate young people to finish school at least a year or two. Each parent we take in about 10 young people for vocational programs, we see the incoming 11 in preferential courses such as nursing and education. The other seems to be paying off: some of those young people are now working, and helping their families; some are staffing our programs; and outside of the parish, another is the very effective president of the parent-run council in one of our chapels.

Finally, in the interest of such centers to the five children mentioned above gathered around them all the children of the area, we have started a feeding program, intended to help parents to have the number of children that they can provide for adequately. Currently there are more than 300 children participating.

Any more [Christmas is coming. Despite all of the problems, Christmas is always a very happy time in Payatas. Not only because of the parties and gifts, but especially because it reminds the people that the Lord came, not in a surprises to take away our problems but to experience and share them.

But life also came as a battle; having the bomb on the sick-side "there may have life and have it to the full." (Jn. 13:14) He did not cure all of the sick, not into the midst of all, rather He gave us an example that we should do likewise. This is the challenge to us and are corresponding to more in our own small way, with the aid of generous friends who help this in our some of more than P3.5 million you. To those who have helped, we are most grateful; those who may wish to help may contact our office at 420-6001 extension 6066.

Comments may be sent to jsacarroll@ateneo.edu.

'Ampon'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

HARDSHIP, HEARTBREAK, AND DISILLUSIONMENT are the issues and there's a good chance they've heard about these celebrities' adoption or children, such be some stories around Thanksgiving and the child-to-be-named to come home (Salem).

There have been questions raised about Madonna's adoption. Should she have adopted a child who still has a father?

Why she want with which she could adopt—would she make a career for people with less in life circumstance, for example, child trafficking? Couldn't she have adopted one of the many orphans and abandoned children in the United States or in England?

When you think hard about all these questions, they all boil down to one issue: the rich and powerful and powerful indulge underlying such adoption. Celebrity parents or not, in New York, London or Manila, these modern and relations ships have to be scrutinized.

Uniquely human

Adoption, whether a child is taken in and raised as one's own biological offspring, is uniquely human. There are no animal species, zoologists remain can, valid and demonstrated, that sometimes adopt such other's offspring, but for most species, the mothering instinct is reserved only for one's own offspring.

Thus how old adoptions are entirely old traits. In many cultures, the Philippines included, children from poorer families are sometimes taken in—even bought—so they can become second servants.

A more benignant and understandable motivation for adoption is to care the child as a form of old age insurance. It's really not unlike a kind of reproduction: in poorer societies like our own, people have more children because they want to be sure someone will care for them in their old age. I've even heard of parents who already have their own biological children but still adopt a few more because they feel that these children will be a protective source of obligations to care for the people who adopted them.

When we're seeing today in developed countries is as well as in more economically vulnerable societies as developing countries, is a more away from that concept of the adopted child as a basic caregiver. Instead, the trend is to take in one of the unwanted children in the world and give them what we can to love in life.

Outer friends in the States, England and the Netherlands who have taken this option, come even deciding not to have biological children of their own and adopting instead. It's no surprise that, in our sudden, labor shortage and aging society, we would find more of home and parents, so why not take them in?

During conversation at lunch, Jean Millan (far-closed at least, every meaning, our closing issue would fill up with French and American parents who had just adopted Vietnamese babies. I realized later that the Philippines is a major source of international adoption and most were quiet accepting, but could under and sold "Gosh." What they mean was that the adoptions were, in a way, enlarging the French colonial empire to old Vietnam in the 19th and 20th centuries, and America's bloody debacle in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s.

Which isn't really a bad thing. In a way, I think we need more of that guilt over in the Philippines, seeing adoption as a way of making up for previous generations' neglect of social problems, including poverty.

Secret

Adoption a quiet widespread in the Philippines, abundant internally somewhat more taking in a nephew or niece, grandparents taking grandchildren, even neighbors taking the kids next door. In this type of the Filipino dialogue, more kids are probably being reared by several sets of caregivers than only one pair of parents—and "pagpa" is a big word.

In some cases, the process may be more complicated. I learned recently from some lawyer friends that some women will go through "simulated birth," alleged some relieving to an abnormal of the birth certificate to make it appear that someone gave birth to a child they had adopted.

I suppose one reason to shun the idea of adoption, despite its being so widespread, is still stigmatized. "Ampon kasi," people will whisper, meaning "only adopted." Many adoptive parents will try to pregnant, for as long as possible, telling the child that he or she is not their biological child. Some parents wait till the child is in his or her teens before disclosing the adoption. It was that adolescence is such a difficult time for many children, learning to deal with their being adopted could lead to a major crisis.

"Be will tend to change the practice of keeping adoption a secret. Child-welfare experts recommend telling the adopted child as early as possible and explaining that an adopted child was actually blessed more than a "normal" one.

All ears

Another reason why adoptions are often done without going to court is that the process is tedious and time-consuming. Besides, one may not be able to afford it. Illegal adoptions are done by intermediate go-betters, and while the poor, there's nothing accident.

Despite maybe a lot of love I could on American countries anyone where I was a kid called "All Ears to Give" where the children were given some advice on how to write letters to prospective the to our urban poor economies, there are similar cases happening all the time, a friend of siblings suddenly orphaned, or abandoned. In these cases, is rare the close child who has to look for homes; instead, the neighbors some or, no question asked, distributing the kid among themselves. Informal adoption, in short, is the norm in the Philippines.

All this says a lot about our Filipino term "ampon," which isn't quite like the legalized concept we think of. Jose Rizal's Tagalog dictionary defines "ampon" as more of a process of taking someone in or care.

We've been seeing a lot of adoption changing in the States. A friend of mine, Ben Bengwayan, is vehemently against the altered adoption as child so you'll have a caregiver when you're old. A modern fix, problematic. Ben says that if you want security in old age, work out a good retirement plan. The children? You give them the best opportunities in life and raise them to be good people. Later they care "pay back" by being good parents to the next generation, and he is include adopting as well.

Four gods

The other week, I sat my oldest nephew graduated by Ballet University on the four different sizes of God that students are believe in. Brother Guidette Claire went to point out that I had only described three. He asked I did define the description of the fourth one while ordering. Here again are the four Gods:

Deists: A God who is the author of the laws of nature and created in an indifferent to us. And, with a little more effort as well as personal terms and a often angry Ancient Of previous beliefs in a Chosen God, who sets the laws of nature in motion but doesn't intervene in the world. Following closely on the 18 century deists, the God of the Enlightenment is a God who is active in daily life but less likely to be angry or punish people. Finally, 18 percent are a Critical God, who involves rather than intervenes with the world but will enter our justice and punishment in the next life.

What monetary policy does China need?

WORLD VIEW

Harvey Goodfriend and Jamus Pruned

CHINA'S EXHAUSTIVE GROWTH HAS BEEN financed recently in a rapid expansion of money and bank credit that is producing an increasingly unsustainable investment boom. This source concerns that the country may not be able to meet a rapidly of the possible boom and bust cycle such as the cycle we experienced in the mid 1990s.

Monetary policy is usually the first line of defense in such situations. But China's monetary policy has been hamstrung by the rigidly managed exchange rate regime. The regime prevents the central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBC), from taking appropriate policy decisions to manage domestic demand. Interest interest rate hikes could encourage capital inflows and put but her pressure on the exchange rate.

The PBC, of course, is responsible for managing China's exchange rate policy. China's rising trade surplus has led many observers to call for a revaluation of the renminbi to correct what they see as an unfair competitive advantage that Chinese exporters enjoy in international markets. Others argue that the public exchange rate has become a convenient stability of China, but the different interest rate point.

What China really needs is a truly independent monetary policy oriented to domestic objectives. The PBC should raise interest rates to counteract demand, allowing interest rates to rise in order to rein in credit growth and deter reckless investments. An independent monetary policy requires a flexible exchange rate, not a revaluation. But what could take the place of the fixed exchange rate as a nominal anchor for policy and help to implement inflation-targeting?

Recommended a low inflation objective as the anchor for monetary policy in China. Theoretical research and the potential improvements of many countries both show that keeping an price stability over the long run is the best way for monetary policy to achieve its maximum contribution to the welfare of the people. Short-term economic and financial stability, high employment growth, etc. The low inflation objective would not involve the banishment of an inflation-targeting regime, such as that practiced by the European Central Bank and the Bank of England, and a similar approach is also recommended for the United States by US Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke.

How could such a framework be operated effectively in an economy in which financial interest problems that are much more serious than in the US? The transmission mechanism? That is for interest decisions, monetary-banking sector reforms, the banking system remains fragile. Interbank rate, we believe that a limited set of financial sector reforms would be sufficient to make interest rates strong enough to withstand substantial interest rate policy actions—should suffice to implement price inflation objectives.

Although full modernization of the financial sector is a long way off in most of the Chinese economy, the limited reforms that are recommended could strengthen the banking system sufficiently in the near term to support a more flexible exchange rate anchored by an inflation objective. Indeed, price stability such be broader interest-rate stability emerging from it, would provide a good foundation for pushing forward with other financial sector reforms.

The framework we suggest has the important benefit of consistency. The PBC would not have to change its operational approach to monetary policy. Only a change in the operational framework for the operations to accommodate monetary policy would be required. Moreover, the framework would help ensure the monetary and financial stability that China needs as it allows greater exchange-rate flexibility.

Private Syndicate

Harvey Goodfriend is a professor at the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University and was previously senior vice president and policy advisor at the US Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Jamus Pruned is chief at the Financial Studies Division in the IMF's Research Department.

METRO

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INQUIRER

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Epira serves transnationals

SINCE PEOI. RAMOS' PRESIDENCY UP TO Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's, our country has been steadily losing productive sectors to foreign interests. So thanks to the privatization of power plants, hydroelectric dams, oil and natural gas wells and geothermal sites. So thanks to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) which mandates the privatization of these resources. It was GMA who, a few months into her term, unleashed the approval of the Epira in Congress.

Public privatization purports to relieve government from indebtedness and the "unnecessary" burden of providing subsidies to steal public utilities, it in fact facilitates the entry of foreign transnationals and control of national economies by them. In the Philippines, it has allowed them to become the dominant players among the independent power producers (IPPs).

These IPPs, owned by Aspec, Ailison Global, Meiant and others, are the same power utility companies that bill us for the power purchase agreement (PPA) that remains hidden in our "unbundled" bills which we continue to pay to this day. Only these foreign transnationals, alongside a number of local power tycoons (Aspec, Aboitiz, etc.), have the financial capacity to operate and maintain power generation, transmission and distribution, and even to buy out the the National Power Corp. These firms enjoy tax exemptions and preferential treatments that lead to further government loss-es. So the Epira allows [illegible] or losses and loans which drive electricity rates up [illegible].

Even the much-touted renewable energy bill pins its hopes on foreign investments to develop biofuels and a renewable energy industry. The parts and machinery necessary for the production and use of biofuels, solar and wind energy are still going to be imported from other countries.

The continuing privatization of the power industry under the Epira runs counter to the interests of the Filipino people. It has only made electricity more inaccessible due to ever increasing costs.

A government serious in developing our economy and desirous to contain the welfare of the people should provide those vital services infrastructures and affordable services. It should also ensure that public utilities are part of the basic industries it builds. It should not leave the foreign investors to do the task. Sadly, this cannot be done by an administration that wants to sell our national patrimony above foreign control of vital utilities and is supposedly rooted in genuine industrial development—like the one we have now.

—DR. GIOVANNI TAMAYO,
national chair, Agham,
112 E. Matalahib St., Teachers' Village, QC

LETTERS

No mathematical improbability in winning lotto

I REFER TO JOEY GAMBAS' LETTER (PDI, 11/14/06) which raised his concern about the "mathematical improbability" of the jackpot wins in the lotto draws of Oct. 3, 5 and 17.

The lotto has so many variations now and it is not a mathematical improbability for the millions of lotto players to win the jackpot. Anyone should be happy that the jackpots are being won. It would be cool if no one wins them.

I can only reassure Gambas that it's impossible to imagine with the lotto system, would-be's in the most honest gaming there is; and facilitation believe me.

Lotto is a game of chance and luck. Nobody can predict who'd be lucky on any given day. There was a draw sometime in 1996 where no less than 22 bettors hit the jackpot. All of them bet on the same number combination. That's even more "unbelievable" if we are to follow Gambas' thinking. But it's true, and it did happen. I was then the chief and general manager of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and I paid all 22 of them.

—MANUEL L. MORATO,
director,
Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office,
Queirox Certificate Compound,
E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City

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November 24, 2006

On Top Gear

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Watching Pacquiao lethal for 2 men

THE PACQUIAO-MORALES fight carried a lethal punch for two men who died separately as they watched the boxing match unfold, the other in a delayed telecast.

In Mister Ballilo, Negros Occidental, a 72-year-old retired policeman, died of a heart attack after he defied doctor's advice not to get overexcited and went on to watch the Pacquiao-Morales fight on Sunday.

In Toledo City, Cebu, a 47-year-old former boxer and avid fan of Pacquiao suffered a hypertensive attack as he watched the boxing match on a delayed telecast.

Leopoldo Glaser, the retired gamekeeper from Mister Ballilo, has been suffering from chest pains and was warned by his doctor not to get too excited, according to his daughter, Joy Olaire.

George Bugtai Sr., 47, of Sitio Dalid, Cabitoonan, Toledo City was declared dead on arrival at the Toledo District Hospital, where he was brought after collapsing as he watched the delayed telecast of the fight.

Bugtai, according to doctors, suffered a hypertensive attack.

His wife, Lydia, 46, said they were having fun watching the fight even if it was already a delayed telecast because no one had told them that Pacquiao already won at that time.

In Mister Ballilo, Leopoldo's family said he was such a big fan of Pacquiao that he went over to a neighbor's house to watch the fight on TV without his family's knowledge.

Joy, Leopoldo's daughter, said her father didn't inform the family that he would watch the fight probably because he knew he wouldn't be allowed to.

Leopoldo's wife, Lorina, 69, said she looked for Leopoldo and found him in front of the TV at their neighbor's house. Lorina couldn't keep Leopoldo from watching the fight, so she did what she thought was the next best thing—watch the fight with him.

After the fight, Lorina said Leopoldo was so happy over the victory of Pacquiao but complained that it ended too soon as Pacquiao won by unanimous knockout on the third round.

Leopoldo, according to Lorina, validated the fight worth almost P80 round.

It was at home, 20 minutes after watching the fight in their neighbor's house, that Leopoldo suffered a heart attack.

A BOY ties on his teddy as he joins hundreds of other spectators in watching the Pacquiao-Morales fight at the town plaza of Gubatanon, Albay.

Joy said her father was rushed to the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Regional Hospital in the city and was kept alive by a respirator, but not for long.

He died 11 p.m. Sunday hours after the fight.

Lorina said Leopoldo had been excited over the fight even before it was held. The excitement would show whenever the fight is plugged on TV, Lorina said.

Leopoldo, Lorina said, believed that Morales didn't have a chance against Pacquiao.

She said while it was painful to lose her husband, she was sure he died happy that Pacquiao won.

In Toledo City, Lydia said her husband was just sitting on the floor while watching the fight.

Lydia said George was even more jubilant when Morales was knocked down twice on the third round until the ring announcer announced that Pacquiao won against Morales.

While they were in a jubilant mood, they noticed George falling to the floor.

"The retired ice cowboy even joked that his father imitated Morales who was knocked down," Lydia recalled.

When she noticed that George was not moving, she approached her husband and tried to revive him.

Lydia said they brought George to the hospital but the doctors told them that George was already dead. Lydia said her husband had no heart problem, but he was hypertensive. Carlos P. Conan and Jhannon Magallanan, Inquirer Visayas

HK group says RP gov't can't protect people

DAILY CITY—A HONG KONG-based human rights group accused the Philippine government of failing to protect the people against crime, citing the more than 700 extra-judicial killings and 200 forced disappearances of activists as evidence.

In a statement, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) even said that the government might have foiled its own coup because of its ineffectiveness, if not participation, in the assassination of those considered critical of the government.

"This is a serious concern, certainly as the Philippines is a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council," said Michael Anthony, program coordinator of AHRC.

AHRC's statement came after a fact-finding mission on the summary executions and disappearances, participated in by foreign human rights groups, was conducted in the Philippines in July.

The mission, participated in by AHRC, the Asian Students Association, the Hong Kong Bar Association, Hong Kong Christian Institute, the Hong Kong Human Rights Association, the Justice and Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese, St. John's Cathedral, the English-language South China Morning Post newspaper, Unibod 93, Sprint in Hong Kong and the Chinese-language Ta Kung Pao and Zhenhua Magazine, was organized by the Hong Kong Campaign for the Advancement of Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (HKCAHRPP) and the International Campaign to Stop the Killings in the Philippines (ICTK).

In a mission report, the participants condemned the rising extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances.

The report also indicated that many witnesses or relatives of victims believed that the government was engaged in a campaign to eliminate leftist groups and individuals in the country.

"The killings and disappearances appears to specifically target left-leaning political activists, human rights defenders, members of the clergy, students, lawyers and journalists," the report added.

Anthony said the perpetrators of the attacks continue to commit murder with impunity.

He said efforts by the government to investigate the abuses have thus far been nothing more than window-dressing.

"Only a few cases are being investigated by the authorities and even fewer leading to prosecutions. There are serious doubts as to the independence and effectiveness of the investigating bodies," Anthony said. —Jeffrey Tupaz, Inquirer Bilkosmos

Airline cuts Legazpi-Manila route; passengers surprised

LEGAZPI CITY—JUST A MONTH after offering daily flights from to the two-a-week schedule, Air Philippines, the sister company of national flag carrier Philippine Air Lines (PAL), suddenly scrapped its operations here severing the Bicol region's only air link to Manila.

Upon Inquirer's confirmation from the flight records of the Air Transportation Office (ATO) here, the Lucio Tan-owned Air Philippines officially made its last flight from Legazpi last Nov. 15.

Witness the Inquirer made a call to two numbers previously listed as Air Philippines'—the first now belongs to Cebu Pacific's ticketing office here while the second is now a private number.

According to Hector Delgado, sales and marketing manager of Peppermint Hotel, a hotel near the Legazpi Airport, many of their guests and clients who booked in advance with Air Philippines expressed shock and anger over the airline's backing of its service.

When interviewed in October, Antonio Cua, Air Philippines' sales manager, said their flights were usually booked 60 to 80 percent.

Cebu Pacific, which entered current fixed fare in August, or less than three months ago, has expanded a dramatic surge in passenger load of their 150-seat Airbus 320.

From just 25 percent in August to September, this has dramatically climbed to "75 to 85 percent" over the past month, according to Alfredo Ramonal, Cebu Pacific's station manager here.

"In fact, our plane is fully booked today," said Ramonal. "There are a lot of stress passengers whom we cannot give seats because of on-the-spot reservations for the same day."

Cebu Pacific, which started the low-fare competition, flies daily to and from Manila on an afternoon schedule, balancing PAL's early morning flight.

Unconfirmed reports said that Air Philippines will redeploy its fleet to the low-air traffic Naga City airport, to San Jose, PH, Camarines Sur, which is about two hours away by land from Legazpi City.

The ATO says PAL services the Manila-Naga route on an irregular basis.

The ATO added that Air Philippines has not submitted an official letter informing them the airline has officially ended its operations here. Dalmar L. Reyes, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Telephone Ring Tones		8 tones	8 tones	8 tones	8 tones	8 tones
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Key Lock		•	•	•	•	
Colored LCD			•			•
Large LCD with Blue Backlight						
Caller Identity Display			•	•	•	•
Call Time Remaining Counter			•	•	•	•
Phone Directory	1 station	50 stations	300 stations	70 stations (Caller ID) 300 stations (Phone Directory)	70 stations (Caller ID) 300 stations (Phone Directory)	300 stations
Handset Locator (Paging)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Intercom w/ 3-way calling				•	•	
Speakerphone			•	•	•	•
Dual Keypads				•	•	
Telephone Answering System					•	
Caller Identity						•
Answer Text for Text Message						•
Audio Conference						•
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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

John Jon Bandayrel
Bureau Chief/Rolando B. Fernandez

Bonsai lovers seek rare tree

This root burn is on he the prized and rare "baniyan" tree species.

BONSAI enthusiasts admire the prized "baniyan" on display in Baguio City.

By Gabriel Cardenas
Villasis, Pangasinan

BONSAI RAISERS AND ENTHUSIASTS in Pangasinan are in a mad hunt for a tree locally called the *baniyan*. So mad that they are willing to risk their lives just to get hold of the prized species.

AN AWARD-WINNING bonsai stays its mood in the shores of northeastern Luzon.

And for good reason. Not only does the *baniyan* make a good bonsai but it also commands a very good price.

Michael Mendoza, president of the Pangasinan Bonsai Society, said five bonsai raisers in the province and another in neighboring La Union had been sending out scouts five months a year to look for the trees in their natural habitat.

Bonsai-quality *baniyan* (*Ficus*) *nitida*) thrives in the rugged, coralline shores of northeastern Luzon and Ilaya, a province island to the Babuyan Channel and inhabited by some 400 families. This coastal stretch is also the country's typhoon path, with 10 to 15 typhoons from the Pacific Ocean hitting it every year.

Natural bonsai

"*Baniyan* is a natural bonsai in that part of the country," said Mendoza, who owns the Pangasinan Bonsai Center in Villasis town. "It is hard, it has inconsistent, good bark, good deliwood and small leaves."

Blown by strong winds and swept by heavy waves, it bends to the ground, only to go upright again in many months and resume its curve when typhoons come, he said.

"At night, it is gently caressed by the sea breeze, perhaps the only literature it gets from its harsh environment," he said.

Its sheer natural beauty may be the reason *baniyan* bonsai has dominated local and international contests and exhibits.

At the Third National Bonsai Exhibition and Competition in June at the Ilsangel-La Piscia in Mandaluyong City, four of the top five bonsai were baniyan. It also received the most number of special awards.

Hunting season

The hunting season is from March to July, according to Mendoza, when it is less dangerous to scour the sea because there are no giant waves and strong winds.

The search classically jokingly calls the "Hercule Gang" (from "*pavabali*," as Bavans used for digger) complains 10 to 15 men, who carry with them provisions good for one weeks. —rice, canned goods, first aid kits, clothing and mosquito nets to dig out the trees.

Most of the members are diggers but at least once in a generation, once-in-a "spector" and two-at least superstars, Mendoza said.

The mission usually takes long boat rides and extended walks on an island or shoreline. Upon arrival, the teams scan around, marking the trees they have chosen. When they have enough loots, they begin choosing the best of the marked trees, and start digging.

In some days, the hunters would get stranded on an island because a typhoon had suddenly made the high seas rough and wild.

In February last year, three local hunters from Bagalaud, Bauco State, were declared missing at sea after leaving town supplied their boats. Mendoza said their bodies had remained unknown.

"They called me to ask if they can go ahead and hunt. But I told them to wait because at that time, it was still dangerous," he said.

If they are lucky, Mendoza said the team would bring home bonsai-quality baniyan. It takes them hours to dig a tree and, mindful mainly for them, they can only take with them 20 trees in their boat.

Worth the risk

Mendoza said searching for the baniyan was worth all the risks. "It has a very good price. It was one-some awards, and most of all, it introduced me to a lot of new friends."

At his bonsai center, Mendoza maintains 70 baniyan trees. He earlier sold one tree for P150,000 and two others, for P340,000 and P110,000. All the other trees are priced from P50,000 to P80,000.

In 2003, Mendoza was to the Asia Pacific Bonsai Conference at the SM Megamall were second prize. The following year, he wants to the First National Bonsai Exhibition and Competition at the Ilsangel-La was the second and seventh prizes.

During the Second National Bonsai Exhibition and Competition, a baniyan bonsai bought from him was among the Top 10 entries.

"Whenever they see us, they say we're Baguio City or Dagupan City, several bonsai lovers from Metro Manila regularly drop by Mendoza's garden to buy or "just spend a few hours to enjoy and admire the dwarfed marvels."

But perhaps the most fulfilling for him, Mendoza said, was the fact that his bonsai had become a source of livelihood.

"What started as a hobby 10 years ago is now a livelihood and it's going to save my life," Mendoza said.

On Monday, Mendoza underwent surgery to remove his gallstones. His doctor, Dr. Ma Sto Tan, director of the Metropolitan Hospital in Tarlac, had agreed to accept three bonsai for the procedure.

Benguet's basket showcase of its hardworking women

By Delmar Carbis
In Trinidad, Benguet

BENGUET WOMEN STILL USE the "kayabang" to carry farm products, such as camote (sweet potato) and gabi (yam), from the area (farm).

The native basket simply refuses to fade away. In fact, it has become the province's symbol for its hardworking women, who are typically known to be shy.

That's why when the Ashway Benguet's annual cultural and tourism festival which opened this week, those a woman with a kayabang as motif, shirt and officials played the group in approval.

"We take pride in the kayabang, which is a unique creation of the province," said Gov. Borromeo Melchor. "While figures were not traditionally loose and strong, the women are hardworking, too, and the kayabang is a symbol of such industry."

Shaped like a funnel, the basket is carried by women on their back held onto the forehead with a piece of cloth called "*tapi*" or "*tayal*."

Made of bamboo, the basket is used like today's backpack.

"We chose the basket as a motif of the Ashway because it is traditionally unique and reflective of what Benguet is," said Clarita Prudencio, provincial tourism officer.

She said the kayabang must be viewed both as an expression of indigenous artistry in basket making and as a symbol of women's involvement in agriculture.

It goes beyond that, said Dr. Estrella Pinpangan, an ethnolinguist and professor at the Saint Louis University in Baguio City.

Inheritance

Traditionally, the kayabang is like an inheritance passed on by one generation to another, Pinpangan said.

"But it is not considered a [inherited] wealth. It is more of an item that the ancestors have learned to impart because it symbolizes strength," he said.

Pinpangan said the women learned to like the basket because they found that they could carry their crops without sweating too much. The crop loads became "unladen" or "unsweaty-ate," meaning light to carry, he said.

The way the basket was made, though, has some scientific explanation—a fact which Pinpangan was not sure of if the ancestors knew of it came by accident.

"KAYABANG": Benguet's symbol.

"The basket's design made the weight of the crops loaded evenly distributed in proportion to the strength of the back of the woman. Its funnel shape balanced the woman's strength which gave her the inertia she needed to be able to move the crops," he said.

This explains why the kayabang is fitted for women who have to carry their products up and down along mountainsides, he said.

Unlike other baskets that burden one side of the body when carried, the kayabang frees the hands of the women.

Cultural significance

"This adds further to the basket's cultural significance," Pinpangan said.

With the basket hanging on the back, the woman could conveniently play the "*paldong*" or "*pasiput*," an indigenous musical instrument made from small bamboo stems, he said. The instrument has a slit and produces sound when the edge of the palm is hit.

"The sound becomes a rite of passage for the woman," Pinpangan said, "asking the ancestors' spirits to allow her to pass safely."

This year's Ashway features a contest among the 13 towns of the province to produce the biggest kayabang. Lisa Colting, provincial tourism council head, said the contest was one way of recognizing the basket's role in the local economy.

"It will also be a way of paying tribute to the women of the province whom Ayaubong media deems a pillar of the economy," she said.

Board Member Fernando Bas has another suggestion.

"Let's put up a giant kayabang in Mt. Sto. Tomas in Tuba town so that when visitors arrive, they will ask what the concentric basket is all about," he said.

Thousands of RP kids in Malaysia tagged refugees

ZAMBOANGA (3/7)—THOUsands of children of undocumented Filipino workers in Malaysia have remained stateless without returning to Mindanao highlights after recently visited Malaysia.

Deputy Rep. Rosalina Bistoni of the Philippine congressional who investigated reported abuses suffered by Filipinos in Malaysia, said these children are known as "potential"

Pakistan is a State Malaysia and which means refugee.

"Investment they are called Malaysian (Malaysian/Filipino) and they are in limbo because they do not know where to go for help," he said.

Jinkins said the Philippines and the Malaysia government must come up with a new agreement that would address the plight of these stateless people.

"(A new agreement) should be forged so that these offspring of undocumented Filipinos can have a choice. They were Malaysians born but Filipinos by blood," he said.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Esteban Conejos said the government must has been trying to address this issue.

"Since we have identified the problems, we are now working for a solution in addressing it through a national, a collaborated and humane approach," Conejos said.

He said the government was drafting an agreement, which would be submitted to Congress for approval.

The agencies involved in drafting the agreement were the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"If we have the (draft) agreement in hand, we can already sound it out with our Malaysian counterparts and then we can present to the 8th SP-Malaysia Migrant Workers Group meeting in October 4," Conejos said.

The meeting is expected to take place early next year.

Asok Mendoza, Rep. Maj's Habataan said they want an educational program for children of undocumented Filipino workers included in the agreement.

He said this should benefit even those currently under detention for violation of Malaysian immigration laws. —Ador S. Alparis, Inquirer Mindanao

TI-SIX defense chief Angelo Reyes (lower) fill rubber rifle in this file photo of a military exercise held at Fort Magsaysay, the Army's biggest camp and what the Army said holds as political prisoners.

Cops nab 3 after raid on 2 Tarlac shabu labs

By Alexis Pugo

TWO LABORATORIES CAPABLE of producing billions of pesos worth of shabu have been raided over the weekend in Tarlac by police and antinarcotics agents.

Suspects resembling Camp Crame said three suspects, who were suspected to be operating the laboratories, were arrested.

Senior Supt. Wenceslao Bautista identified the suspects as Jaime Chua, his live-in partner Arsenia Chua and Chua Sui Yu.

"Our relentless campaign against illegal drug trafficking led to the discovery and dismantling of the two suspected shabu labs and prompted the campers and other members of their group from making the province a major supplier of shabu in the country," Bautista said.

Bautista said the raiders confiscated 70 bottles of sodium hydroxide, chloric acid and palladium. Pat Ingalles, Bautista said the substances can produce 17 tons of shabu worth P3.2 billion.

The first laboratory was raided by Tarlac police and members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) last Friday in Sitio Aplaya, Barangay Cuta where Jaime Chua and Chua were arrested.

Follow-up operations led to the raid on the second shabu in Brgy. Matatalaib where Arsenia Chua was arrested.

Bautista said that identified chemical equipment and other items used to make shabu were also discovered in the raids, leading them to think that the two laboratories were "operating to manufacture."

The raids were covered by search warrants issued by Judge Rolly Villarosa and Judge Antonio Belmonte of courts in Tarlac.

Chief Supt. Daniel Razon, regional police chief, ordered his agents to conduct follow-up operations of the other cohorts of the arrested suspects.

Army general says Nueva Ecija camp no place for missing leftists

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—FORT Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, the largest Army camp in the country, is not being used as a detention center or a concentration camp for missing activists or communist rebels, a top military official said here on Tuesday.

Lt. Gen. Roy Devarin Ramos, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), issued the statement in reaction to a newspaper column that quoted a supposed witness who claimed that he and his three companions were held and tortured at a cell in Fort Magsaysay.

"We're bewildered, stirred at putting the military in a bad light," Ramos said of Oscar Lemuel's affidavit. "It's so fantasized and scripted."

Lemuel claimed their captors used Kumpit, Bernabe Mendiola and the couple Nilo Tayag and Sonia Calilap, who were supposedly scheduled following an encounter on April 17 in Dalo Remolino Trinidad town in Bulacan, abducted missing.

Ramos dismissed the claims of Lemuel, a security guard in a missing firm near the encounter site, by saying that "no such thing as an event has been made."

Ramos said troops from the 56th Infantry Battalion held 14 people found in the encounter site for interrogation.

But he said they were "released to and reverted to good physical condition to the foreign captain."

It was then that group that Mendiola and the Calilap couple belonged, Lemuel said.

Ramos said Lemuel could not have accessed the location where they were taken—first to Camp Tinio in San Miguel, Bulacan, and then to Fort Magsaysay—because Lemuel claimed that he was blindfolded and he estimated the time to be around 10 p.m. of April 17.

Ramos said it was also "nonsensical" for Lemuel to claim that for detention center was in Fort Magsaysay based on the round of places leading in and ending off.

"That airstrip is very rarely used. The fact is not an international airport," he said.

Ramos said the fact makes only one pad that is widely used for "strong organic movement." He said he based his conclusion on the report of Maj. Gen. Juanito Rosario, chief of the 7th Infantry Division, the host unit in the fort.

Asked if he has personally seen the facility, Ramos said checked if some buildings might have been converted as holding areas for leftists, Ramos said. "I'm taking General Gomez's words."

Gomez also belied reports that Undersecretary of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights Commissioner Leah Tanodra-Armamento were being kept at the fort after their abduction in Aurora in Pinatubo Bukidnon.

He said Ishak from Gerardo, Nueva Ecija on Oct. 28 were reportedly taken to the fort.

"The fort is not center of operations and training camp. We're not keeping anyone here against their will," Gomez told the legislators.

The human rights advocate group Karapatan has monitored 38 missing activists in Central Luzon since February 2001. Only one, Raymond Manalo of Bulacan, turned up dead a week after armed men seized him from his house.

In Baguio City, officials of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance assailed Nolcom for tagging slain political activists as members of communist rebels.

Beverly Longid, UMA vice chair, said a Bulacan report, which has been circulating in the Internet since last week, tried to justify the killing of four "Boy" Manuyag, Reyner Mesa Jimson coordinator, and Alfred Terrobado, a human rights worker and president of the employees' union of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Abra.

The report said both activists, who were killed last year, "might have been reported to death by the CPP/NPA/NDF (Communist Party of the Philippines/ New People's Army/ National Democratic Front of the Philippines) because by being exposed as government agents."

Longid said the report was trying to spoil coverage of the deaths of the victims by mass media.

"Whether or not they are members of the CPP-NPA is not the issue. The killings of Manuyag and Terrobado are simply senseless. They have been judged and (killed) without due process of law," she said.

She said these slain activists were members of legal organizations advocating the rights of farmers and workers in the Ilocos and Abra. —Dwel D. Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon and Beatrice Zafiaco, Inquirer Northern Luzon

> "...Whether or not they are members of the CPP-NPA is not the issue. The killings ... are simply senseless..."

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7:30 - 8:30	Registration
8:30 - 8:40	Opening Remarks Emerico O. De Guzman, PPM President, PMAP Grace Alvelo-Zeny Conference Chair
8:40 - 9:10	The Philippine Competitiveness Roadmap
9:10 - 9:40	Investment Trends of PEZA: Implications for Employment Ceb De Lima, Director General, PEZA
9:40 - 10:10	Employment Opportunities and Academe-Industry Partnerships in Knowledge Process Outsourcing Cesar Ralaldo, Country Head, Deutsche Knowledge Services Pte
10:10 - 10:40	Private Education Initiatives to Address Opportunities and Gaps Vincent Asbella, COCOPEA President
10:40 - 11:10	The Filipino Advantage Benedict Hernandez General Manager, 9 Telecom
11:10 - 11:40	Do Young People Have a Future in the Philippines? Dennis Kraemer Chabot Writer, Battle of the Business Plans Entrepreneurial Idol of the World Harvard University, USA
11:40 - 12:40	Lunch

Confirmed Speakers for Concurrent Sessions:
Philip Maconing, Sales Director
Dell Marine Phils
JP Cabrera, VP, Avaya Corporation
Dean Conrad Inigo, CEU and CHED Technical Group for Business
Ramon Medina, CHED Technical Group for HR
Robert Robleta, VP, Jollibee Foods Corporation
Dave Alvez, Philippine Plaza
Ernst Bertuis, HR Director, Anglogan Devcos
Rene Dames, VP Honda Philippines
Dr. Bonifacio Dones, PMP Academic Affairs, Mapua Institute of Technology
Mitch Gomez, Executive Director, Business Process Outsourcing Association of the Philippines
Mon Sales, CICT Commissioner
Isagani Cruz, Head, Teacher's Academy, ITI
Armand del Rosario, President, Board of Healthcare Accreditation and Certification
Ramon Isaac, President, Philippine Software Industry Association
Fernando Calo, DTI Export Trade Promotion

4:30 - 5:00 Integration
5:00 - 6:00 Cocktail

REP. PETER CAYETANO submits his answers and complaints against First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Representatives Mikey Arroyo and Ignacio Arroyo and Dinadiado Macapagal Arroyo.

THANK'S NO SHOWDOWN Newsmen Mr. Mike Arroyo [turn with son Dave] and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, as the former had hoped, at the House of Representatives committee on Tuesday.

Cayetano springs surprise on Arroyos

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off with Cayetano during the first oral proceedings.

"Sure. Absolutely, if he's properly summoned. He's going to go," the lawyer said after the adjournment.

Bonifacio accused Cayetano of dilatory tactics.

Cayetano had held itself to the block. The Arroyos have sought his expulsion from the legislature over his accusations against the First Family.

Adjourned

The committee's agenda was to ascertain if the two complaints for impeptive conduct lodged by the four Arroyo sons against Cayetano were sufficient in form and substance.

Instead, with Cayetano's supporters present and upon a motion from both sides, the committee adjourned to give members time to study Cayetano's answers to the lawyers' complaints.

In his formal answer, Cayetano called for the dismissal of the complaints against him.

"First, he asked the committee to also "initiate expulsion proceedings against Jose Miguel Arroyo and Ignacio Arroyo."

Opposition witnesses in a high profile Senate inquiry had linked both Iggy and Mikey to jueteng payoffs — one allegation denied by the Arroyos.

Fortunately, the only one that I can change is the other counsels are Congressman Mikey and Iggy because I can't have the First Gentleman expelled because he's not a public official," Cayetano said.

"The only one who can expel him from Malacañang is his spouse, Ditas."

Flimsy, frivolous

Rep. Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur said Cayetano's answers were without precedent.

"It's just a very flimsy, frivolous, fabricated and ill-motivated answer," Villafuerte said of Cayetano's action.

"Before don't proceedings were a free for-from the hearing on May, if when the committee gives due course to the two complaints against Cayetano and ordered Cayetano to reply to them.

Outnumbered by administration allies, Cayetano said the ethics committee is the proper forum.

Cayetano told reporters that the Arroyos should be the ones subjected to an ethics investigation because their bad acts[illegible] violate[illegible] dishonesty, betrayal of public trust, bribery and involvement in election fraud in 2004.

Challenge to the House

"They want to be a house the complainants, Ilong cases here and there, but they don't want to answers the issues," Cayetano said.

He said the ethics case "will prove if the House of Representatives is corrupted by their representatives."

In his written answer, Cayetano also said that based on the Senate investigation, Iggy is over "continuous in connection with illegal gambling activities" and Jose Miguel "appears to be concealing their ostensible properties, including cash deposited in BPI Family Bank Mabini-Pedro Bonoan Account No. 0012-[illegible]."

"Their imbecilitation as persons has been engineering my opinion and positions on issues of national importance and on the many anomalous transactions and malfeasances of the administration constitute violations of my parliamentary immunity," said the lawmaker from Taguig-Pateros.

Fabricating evidence

In seeking Cayetano's expulsion from the House of Representatives, Mike Arroyo wanted that Cayetano's "arrogance is overbearing to admit, and apologize to us, to his fact will plunge the House deeper into the depths of humiliation unless we accept, right here, right now."

The Pete Gentleman, who has been paid Cayetano for libel, accused the congressman of improper conduct for allegedly fabricating evidence and making false testimony which, he said, put the entire House to a bad light.

Seeking to discredit Cayetano's claim that there had a secret account with a German bank, the Arroyos submitted a certification issued by the Bayerische Hypo und Vereinsbank AG in Munich showing that Account Nos. 87-570-2300-30-22300-42771571 and 87-570-22300-32300-42771571 supposedly under the names of Ignacio or Jose Miguel Arroyo did not exist.

"Imagine, he even had (his) bio-data catalogues... That's very bad behavior," said the Pete Gentleman, who flew to Munich in late August to disprove the existence of the bank account.

Luxury hotel chain coming back to RP

To page A2

is a "very different" country now.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano yesterday said that Banyan Tree executives would travel for places in the Central Visayas next year to set up one or more resorts.

The announcement of Banyan Tree's decision followed a meeting in Singapore on Monday between Ho Kwon Ping, the hotel's executive chair, and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ho Ching-an hotel provides luxurious personalized services and facilities, unlike the general services provided by large hotel chains. Its size is relatively small — often ranging from three to 100 rooms, including villas — to ensure those services.

This year, Banyan Tree's launch in Phuket, Thailand, lured, as on the premium first of hotels in the world, such as the 500 World's Best in Asia. Top 100 Hotels in the World (Travel and Best Overseas Spa, according to the Banyan Tree website.

"Their category is boutique resorts and they're the number one brand in Asia," Durano said.

MEDICAL TOURISM LAUNCHED: President Macapagal-Arroyo is to giving her attention instructions to Health Secretary Francisco Duque III during the launch of the programs in the PICC in Pasay City.

He said Banyan Tree was in the league of chain hotels with the Aman group of resorts, which uses Amanpulo, the most expensive resort in the country, which charges more than $1,000 a night.

$400 a night

Banyan Tree usually charges $400 to $800 a night, with one villa in its resorts costing $10 to $50 million to build, Durano said.

"These are the really high-end big resorts. It shouldn't be more than a hundred rooms per resort, the really ultra luxury type," he said.

"If that brand will come to the Philippines (and locate in Palawan), it will put Palawan on the international tourism map," Durano added.

He said his group would look at Palawan and Cebu but declined to give specific areas to prevent real estate price escalation once Banyan Tree starts operations.

He said that Banyan Tree decided to give the Philippines a second look because of the improved political and economic situation in the country.

"I think in the last several months, the whole investment and political situation in the Philippines has certainly changed compared to the past," He said in response after meeting Ms Arroyo.

"It has become politically and economically far more stable. The economy is growing well. Global tourism, of course, is growing strongly," he added.

Why Banyan Tree left

"And we've always known that the Philippines would complement's interest in the Philippines has never ceased. So it's not a matter of creating demand. The demand has always been there for the Philippines."

He said "a complete suite of factors ... [was] utilized in economic to attract us to [come] back." Durano said.

Banyan Tree left the Philippines in the early 1990s. Those factors also discouraged investors from coming.

"Access was not very active in us. People after a while did not have the confidence to invest because if you did not have the backup facility you may not succeed," he said.

"What I think there is great confidence today in the global community in the government of the Philippines. And that credibility has prompted many investors, from myself in reaction to investors in other areas, to really want to take a very serious look at the Philippines," he added.

Ms Arroyo's map

Durano said Ms Arroyo showed him a map of the Philippines and suggested areas where Banyan Tree could invest.

"I had a very interesting, very fruitful discussion with Madame President where we indicated the interest of the Banyan Tree group to invest and to operate in the Philippines," Bernald.

"I mentioned to her that we had actually been involved in the Philippines a number of years but we pulled out.

He said Banyan Tree had exerts in over 28 countries, from China to Mexico and Europe, "but we unfortunately neglected the Philippines."

'Very difficult choice'

He said Ms Arroyo gave a "very interesting presentation during Member's lunch.

"Many members of the Inquirer, business community, I think, have a view of the Philippines now that is very different than before," Bernald.

"We are more committed to the President and we will be going within the first quarter of next year to look at several sites to do maybe one or possibly more Banyan Tree resorts," he said.

He said there were "many places of beauty" in the Philippines.

"The choice is going to be very difficult," he said. With a report from Inquirer Research

Lizards in diapers, snakes in bottles seized at Naia

To page A2

environment department's Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), said the numbers could still go up because further inspection showed that some bottles contained more than 20 snakes.

The reptiles will be turned over to the Parks and Wildlife Rescue Center, which will determine whether the reptiles are endangered.

Initial investigation showed that Tangpuz had come from Bangkok via Philippine Airlines PR 132 and was supposed to board PR 726 for Bangkok that was scheduled to depart at 10:50 a.m.

Movements in luggage

However, airport security personnel Eva Dagpin and Marissa Caparas noticed some movements inside Tangpuz's two pieces of luggage while they were being X-rayed.

The two called the police Aviation Security Group (ASG) which said that what were inside could not be explosives.

Customs examiner Dave Macgayan was called to inspect the suitcases.

Upon seeing the reptiles inside, Macgayan alerted wildlife officers Teddy Ajit and Allan Domingo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Macgayan said the snakes were placed in Tangpuz's green luggage while the lizards were packed in a hard black suitcase.

"There were even two dragon on top of the bottles and the [sub-bags] to keep the creatures inside," Macgayan said.

Tall, dark and handsome

"My colleagues say that I wasted the boat," Tangpuz told reporters. She said she studied at a call center in Metro Manila.

She described the man as 5'8" tall, dark and attractive.

However, she did not know him. She did not ask for his name, either.

"He looked responsible," she said in Filipino, explaining why she didn't think twice about letting the luggage or bottles to take a peek into the suitcases.

However, Tangpuz said she was already at the check-in counter at the Bacolod airport when the man approached her with the luggage.

A VIRTUAL ZOO: Customs officials present to the media their offering catch of 112 snakes, lizards and other species seized from a Filipino traveling to Bangkok. JEFF ZAR

Priority tags

She assumed that the contents of the suitcases had already been screened by the airport security personnel.

Tangpuz said she even told the man jokingly that she hoped the suitcases did not contain a bomb.

ASG Director Andres Caro II said he would have the staff in Bacolod investigated for its failure to detect the reptiles.

Earlier this month, customs had "lizard by" bags on them.

Tangpuz said she was going to Bangkok to meet someone and was only scheduled to stay there for a day.

Aphrodisiacs

Mistrosa said a reptile like could be used for medicinal purposes as an aphrodisiac, while the live reptiles themselves could be used as pets, exhibits or even delicacies in restaurants.

"Do we have rules of the species, entered from Tangpuz's luggage could reach hundreds of thousands of pesos, according to Mistrosa.

Smuggling of wildlife is the second biggest illegal trade worldwide, next to the trafficking of drugs, said Mistrosa's team, citing recently conducted studies.

The seized reptiles are under Category Two of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), which regulates trade of these types of creatures.

Siamese crocodiles

Tangpuz could be charged with violation of Section 6—illegal act or scarcity to any trade—under the Animal Welfare Act because the reptiles should ideally be taped, investigators said. The Philippine Department of the Philippines and violation of the CITES.

Last week, airport officials in Manila found three juvenile Siamese crocodiles in a hand luggage of a Filipina who came from Cambodia via Singapore. Each crocodile was about 1.5 feet long.

The species is on the endangered list under Philippine law and international accords.

Director Fe Estrella Jr. was also fined by airport officials two training vessels for orchid species cultivars without a permit from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Consumers warned vs substandard China cement

DAVAO CITY—A CONSUMER PROTECTION group based here warned of the proliferation of allegedly substandard cement brand from China.

Teresita Padilla, executive director of the Philippine Product Safety and Quality Foundation Inc., said some of the cement brands from China that may contain substandard ratio likely.

The Davao cement brand and red here July 20, according to Padilla.

"It is very important that we become more vigilant in monitoring the market for substandard products that can cause loss of lives and property," said Padilla.

She said tests conducted by the Bureau of Product Standards, an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), showed that the 4,745 cement bags of Hoove cement imported from China had failed the three required tests for quality assurance.

"Because these chemicals of cement lack compressive strength when cured, the hard concrete would crumble and cause accidents that can damage to buildings and naturally, to an inhabitants," Padilla told reporters during a forum at the Waterfront Insular Hotel here on Monday.

The Bureau issued a cease and desist order on the more than 47,000 metric tons of Hoove cement that reached Davao City in July. The DTI was only able to confiscate about 95,000 bags, or less than half of the shipment.

The seized shipment was being stored in a warehouse in Sasa district here.

Ernesto Ordoñez, president of the General Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Cocoop), said the importer of Hoove was based in Mindanao, but he declined to identify him.

But he said local retailers have continuously been getting offers from importers of similarly "questionable" cement products.

Ordoñez said in a former trade endorsement in Davao about the incident of some local importers, including the smuggling of substandard products, heavily sagging.

"A lot of lives is at stake here if such product finds its way to unsuspecting buyers," he said.

Ernesto Paredes, regional sales manager of Holcim cement, said local cement manufacturers are keeping a keen finish of their product desire to ensure control the substandard products.

In this developed, Icelander Sillanema, of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., said he committee on real estate and construction would investigate the status of the substandard cement products.

He said the chamber will send samples to an independent laboratory in Singapore, to settle once and for all questions on the quality of Hoove. Jun-ody L. Sombe, Inquirer Mindanao

Easing of court load traced to village mediation

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE COURT'S cases continue to be swamped with cases but the barangay justice system is getting the backlog some relief of a breathing room, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said here on Sunday.

Zuño said while court dockets are saddled with complaints, the mediation system, under the 1991 ruling Barangay Law (Presidential Decree 1508), has contributed much to decongesting the undocumented filing of cases in courts.

Speaking before barangay officials and leaders Tuesday in Baguio, Zuño said that in the provincial capital here, Zuño said based on the records of the Department of Interior and Local Government, barangay courts had settled 4,062,000 cases from 1980 to 2005.

"This resulted in an estimated government savings of over at least P24 billion," he said.

Zuño said the figures are testimony to the vital role played by the barangay as member of the community, one of the pillars of the criminal justice system.

"Imagine the astronomical increase in court dockets if the Katarungang Pambarangay Law is not in place, court dockets would be heavily congested and the disposition of cases would ultimately suffer," he said.

Telling that an ordinary case filed in court would run P5,000, Zuño said that settlement of cases at the barangay level would end disputes with "less time, money and effort with no expensive resolution."

The late President Ferdinand Marcos issued PD 1508 on June 11, 1978 that created the Katarungang Pambarangay law.

The law later became a part of the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160).

Zuño said the Katarungang Pambarangay is "actually the law doing those happened more justice matters which has roots in the Filipino tradition of seeking conservation of the elders in settling disputes before resorting to any formal or legal action."

He said the members of the Lupong Tagapamayapa should be accorded the same recognition as overseas Filipino workers in terms of the billions of pesos saved by the government annually when cases do not reach courts anymore.

Earlier this P15,7-M, the Japan, which handles visa assistance, is chaired by the barangay chair and composed of barangay council members. (Salvador Caoibes, Inquirer Northern Luzon)

1st Student Advertising Congress

November 22-23, 2006 Aliw Theatre

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DAY 1 November 22

8:30 - 11:45	Advocacies for the Youth	Bong Osorio, President, Cipe! Sandy Prieto, President, Philippine Daily Inquirer
1:15 - 1:30	Globe's Advocacy for the Youth	Rita Ildrick Nepa, Senior Segment Specialist, Segment Business Group, Globe Telecom
1:30 - 2:30	Saan ka Dadi sa Advertising? Creative	Kevin M. Mangada, Managing Partner & Executive Creative Director, TBWA Santiago, Mangada, Puno
	Media	Juliet M. Mendoza, Managing Director, Mediaedge:cia
	Accounts	Alex Zylla, Managing Director/CEO, Zimbjaymedia
	Production	Oli Laperal, President, Bill Video & Productions
	TV Network	Wesley Cologne, President, GMA Marketing and Production
	Radio Network	Jun Nicdao, President, Manila Broadcasting Company
	Production	Bid Medrano, Film Director, MEGAmy Films
	Illustration	Ma. ClarCha Lucero, President, Pinoy Manila Foundation Inc.
2:30 - 3:00	How to Create a Brand that Sticks	Toby Ding, Group Chairman, Campaigns and Grey
3:15 - 3:45	Fuji Xerox Presentation Microsoft Presentation	Ricky Munoz, Consultant Graphic Arts Solutions, Fuji Xerox Sam Jacobe, Head, Integrated Marketing Communications, Microsoft Philippines
3:45 - 4:15	Creating and Defending Big Ideas	Nathan Javier, Creative Director, Jimenez Basic
4:15 - 5:00	The TV Advertising Reel of an Award Winning Director	Jun Reyes, Undet

DAY 2 November 23

8:30 - 8:30	Introducing & Showing of 100 Best Commercials	Raymond Arevalo, Deputy Managing Director, Leo Burnett Manila
8:30 - 11:00	Creative Ads that Travel	Raoul Panes, Creative Director, BBDO/Guerrero Ortega
	Global Representative to Thailand	Jon Escobido, Art Director, Ogilvy Communications
	Cannes Representatives to France	JP Quizon, Art Director, Leo Burnett Manila Coy Barrayuso, Writer, Leo Burnett Manila
7:00 - 10:00	Creative Awards Night	Featuring: 6 Cycle Mind, Celebrity Creators, Manolo Blahnic, Local Pop, Mark Hernan, Ryza Cenon, BOP Boys, Jovelyn Virgo, Brennan Espenilla, Gerard Santos and Arielle Santos

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IT'S NO HOG, FOLKS, but it's still music to the ears and a worship to the eyes of elderly Igorots at the Baguio Botanical Garden.

Esperon stands by decision: 'That is my prerogative'

From page A1

dents and counteraffidavits was reviewed by Esperon's staff Judge Advocate, Col. Pedro Herrera-Davila who submitted a pre-trial advice (PTA) on Nov. 7.

"I will not tell you the contents. Suffice it to say that they are my references. Whatever are their contents, they served as my references in arriving at my decisions," Esperon stressed.

He brushed off concerns that military prosecutors do not have enough evidence to support the mutiny charge.

ESPERON

Sub judice

"I will not talk about the merits of the case, it's sub judice," he said.

Esperon, who has said he wanted to testify in the trial but decided to inhibit himself, is determined to note the trial as soon as possible.

He said the five-man ret. Isabel would be convened within five days, just as reasons as Maj. Gen. Hermilio Tolentino, AFP deputy chief of staff for personnel, recommends the members.

While Esperon ordered on Monday the court-martial for 33 officers led by Miranda, former Marine commandant, and Lim, former Scout Ranger commander, he cleared eight other officers.

MIRANDA

Pangyog case

Curiously, one of those whom he absolved, Maj. Ariel Bingcang, former Scout Rangers operations chief, had been recommended by the PTI panel to stand trial for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Esperon, however, refused to comment on Pangyog's case. "As I said, I do not have to abide by the PTI report and by the PTA," he said.

Under the military justice system, Esperon as the "convening authority" decides whether to subject certain officers and soldiers to court-martial, based on Sajo's recommendation.

He is also the "reviewing authority" who either upholds, modifies or reverses the verdict of the military court.

LIM

Officers to be tried

Esperon had ordered the court-martial of 38 officers namely Miranda, Querubin, Col. Orlando de Leon, Col. Antonio Cardigal, Col. Armando Suñer, Lt. Col. Valentin Heras, Lt. Col. Custodio Parlade, Lt. Col. Achilles Segundalan, Lt. Col. Rolando Eraldayan, Maj. Francisco Fernandez and Lt. Sells. (See list of the Marines).

Lim, Lt. Col. Ernesto Florfelero, Lt. Col. Edmundo Pable, Lt. Col. Ferdinand Aquino, Maj. Jose Encinares, Capt. James Ishalom, Capt. Rolando Almodovar, Capt. Jerry Bautiserian, Capt. Ruben Gerilla(Maj), Capt. Eugene Grimm, Capt. William Espino, Capt. Gil Galvez, Capt. Alfredo Jao Asuncion, Capt. Frederick Sales, 1Lt. Ervin Bringuesca, 1Lt. Jason Gonzales, 1Lt. Homer Bandac, 1Lt. Sandro Serrano and 1Lt. Richmond Labuñog.

Lim has denied allegations he was out to remove a coup attempt

QUERUBIN

on Feb. 24. Reports at that time said that Lim and his men were to join protests marking the 20th anniversary of the People Power Revolution and declare withdrawal of support from the Arroyo regime.

In a video purportedly showing Lim calling Mr. Arroyo a "bogus" president was one of the evidences against the plotters. The video was reportedly prepared to justify soldiers disgruntled over the "Hello Garci" controversy, allegedly showing Mr. Arroyo cheated during the 2004 presidential election.

3 militants killed in Laguna, Surigao City, Sorsogon

From page A1

used a similar joint appeal.

Leftist and human rights groups say political violence has claimed the lives of more than 700 people, including those killed in military operations and cases not reported by relatives fearing reprisals, since Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001. The human rights group Karapatan said the death toll has been 229.

Hearings in Bacolod, Davao

Retired Justice Jose Melo, 74, commission chair, announced hearings would be held in Bacolod City on Nov. 27-28 to discuss a complaint by a farmer that a landlord was using guerrillas of the communist New People's Army to discourage agrarian reform and in Davao City on Dec. 4, also on island Mindanao.

"We will wind up after Bacolod and Davao. You can wait for our report," Melo told the lawyers.

The commission has held only five hearings since it was created by Ms Arroyo in August amid a local and international outcry against an apparent surge of extrajudicial executions.

On the killings of media men, Melo said the National Press Club had expressed its cooperation with the panel in investigating killings of media people.

Leftist and human rights groups have swayed away from the commission, saying the inclusion of the National Bureau of Investigation director and the state prosecutor in the panel put its independence into question.

7 gunshot wounds

Police said Mesa, president of the 319-strong Alaska Milk Workers Union and provincial chair of the leftwing Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Partido ng Manggagawa (BMP/PM), sustained at least seven gunshot wounds and died on the spot.

Senior Dimanlig, Sta Maria police chief, said Mesa was driving his blue Honda Wave motorcycle at around 7:30 a.m. when the assailants blocked his path in Canaynay 2 Subdivision, Barangay Santo Tomas, and shot him.

Dimanlig said five spent shells of a .45 cal. pistol and five shells for a 9 mm pistol were recovered from the scene.

Witnesses said the suspects took the victim's mobile phone and other personal belongings, which were placed under the motorcycle's seat, before they fled on foot.

"This killing is part of the 'grand design' of the government's counterinsurgency offensive to 'de-link' the mass movement supposedly for the latter's easier ambush for false encounter," said Ronnie Lasa, BMP-Calabarzon chair.

Relatives of the victim, however, believe that the scheduled election of MPBT officers on Dec. 3 might be linked to the killing. Mesa, a warehouse clerker in the milk company's factory at Serongay United, has been the union president for 13 years.

Surigao City attack

In the attack at Barangay Taligad in Surigao City, police said Aquilan, 41, was killed by gunshot wounds in the head and in the neck. Two .45 cal. slugs had been recovered. The gunmen fled in a van.

Andrew Lumawag, spokesperson of the human rights group Karapatan, said Aquilan might have been killed because of his work as chair of the leftwing Bukluran Christian Movement of the Philippines. She said the military was the logical suspect.

In Sorsogon City, Judge Adolfo Fajardo of the Regional Trial Court Branch 65, ordered the Philippine Army to produce the body of Bernardino Capoyel, who was kidnapped with Marbella on Nov. 15 at a restaurant there. Su-jardo was responding to a petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed by Capoyel's family.

Cop abducted

Also on Tuesday, the 901st Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Camp Crame confirmed that Cabalquinto was abducted by armed men in front of his house in Barangay Tinambacan, Legazpi City, on Monday.

Police Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, director of the group, said Cabalquinto was abducted by seven armed men who arrived in two vehicles.

Verzosa said Cabalquinto was a member of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force and was assigned to the Legazpi City police.

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THE FACT-FINDING TEAM holds a press conference in Quezon City on Tuesday where it questions the openness of the Arroyo administration to an international probe.

RELATIVES OF KIDNAPPED VICTIMS hold a press conference in Quezon City claiming that the military's violations of human rights have spread for the worse, and are more systematic and relentless. Jonna says her husband Romulo Roblosa, a tricycle driver, is one of three victims of a series of abductions last week in Pampanga.

Customs man rises from ₱1,200 to ₱11 million

From page A1

vehicles and eight buildings and lots in Tanauan, Batangas.

The vehicles—a 2006 Honda Civic, 1995 Mitsubishi Space Wagon, 1995 Toyota, a Toyota 16-Act Van and 2000 Mitsubishi motorcycle—were found to be worth at least ₱2 million.

The "posh and expensive" pieces of real estate—two parcels of land and two buildings in St. Joseph Village, a parcel of land and a building in Darasa, all in Tanauan, Batangas—were "commercially valued" at ₱9 million, BIR said.

"To be sure, it boggles the mind how respondent could afford to finance the purchase of such an extensive portfolio of valuable real estate . . . considering that his current annual salary is only ₱171,600," BIR said in a nine-page complaint.

The foregoing leaves one more stark and glaring consideration that respondent's role is likely akin to low-level government employee seldom any independent income to finance such acquisitions," it said.

BIR said the discovery of Balbuena's wealth also showed that he had "repeatedly perjured" himself by underdeclaring his businesses or income, liabilities and Net Worth (SALN). He also violated Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the Revised Penal Code.

Balbuena declared only two pieces of property in Batangas. He did not state the number of

RESIDENTS of a community in Maguindanao controlled by the MILF go places in bicycles

Scion of Maguindanao royal family appointed governor of new province

COTABATO CITY—A SCION OF A MAGUINDANAO royal family was named head of the newly created province of Sharif Kabunsuan.

Sharif Kabunsuan, named after an Arab-Malay preacher who brought Islam to Central Mindanao in the 14th century, is composed of the former Maguindanao towns of Datu Odin Sinsuat, North Upi, Kabuntalan, Sultan Kudarat, Sultan Mastura, Parang, Barira, Buldon and Matanog.

It became the country's 80th province after residents voted in a plebiscite to approve its creation. The plebiscite was held early this month.

With the creation of the new province, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is now composed of six provinces and one city.

The other provinces are Basilan, Sulu, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Tawi-Tawi. Marawi is the lone city member of the region.

On Monday, ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has appointed Maguindanao Vice Gov. Simeon Datumanong to head the new province in an effort to charge capacity.

Under the ARMM charter, the ARMM governor can appoint officers-in-charge for vacant elective provincial posts to be newly created by congressional acts.

Ampatuan took his oath of office before Ambassador Libid, MILF chief negotiator, said the MILF does not consider Ampatuan an enemy and blamed people opposed to the peace process as the perpetrators of the bomb attack.

Ampatuans agree to meet with MILF leaders to prevent more encounters

COTABATO CITY—MAGUINDANAO GOV Andal Ampatuan has agreed to meet with leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Sharif Aguak town, a Malacañang official said on Monday.

Undersecretary Hermon Sutton, of the Office of the Presidential Assistance on the Peace Process (OPAPP), said the meeting, which the national government has pushed for, was aimed at patching up the differences between the Maguindanao governor and the MILF.

Sutton said Ampatuan will be joined by his son, Zaldy, the governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), during the meeting.

"We Ampatuans are encouraging the holding of a peace dialogue. The old man (Andal) is willing to host that meeting. His wish to be held at his residence," he said.

But the MILF said it has yet to receive an invitation from the Ampatuans, he said.

But he said the MILF was willing to meet with the Maguindanao governor for a discussion.

Clashes between militiamen loyal to Ampatuan and MILF guerrillas have regularly occurred in Sharif Aguak but the most serious was in July when thousands of people were displaced because of violence between the two groups.

The clashes were prompted by a roadside bomb attack, which occurred in June near the Sharif Aguak public market.

The bomb attack, which Ampatuan has blamed on the MILF, occurred shortly after his convoy passed by the market.

Seven people were killed—including four on board a car trailing Ampatuan's car—while at least 10 others were wounded.

"It was a well-planned attack, but it failed to hit its target," Sgt. Lomisk Gonzing, Maguindanao police chief, had said then, referring to Ampatuan.

Ampatuan later said that the MILF has been targeting him because of his involvement in the government's anti-terror campaign.

He said the bomb attack was not the first attempt on his life.

"I can honestly say that we have nothing to do with the latest attempt on the life of the governor," Kabalu said.

Kabalu said the MILF was even willing to help the bomb the investigation.

"We are ready to help if they need our help in the speedy arrest of the perpetrators once they are identified," he said shortly after the bomb attack.

A MEMBER of the MILF undergoes training in sniper fire in a guerrilla camp in Barangay Gawiran Maguindanao.

'...the MILF does not consider Ampatuan an enemy and blamed people opposed to the peace process as the perpetrators of the bomb attack..'

Operation to siphon Petron oil from sunken tanker starts February

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—THE operation to pump out the remaining oil from the sunken tanker Solar 1 will start in February not January as earlier announced, earliest official of the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund.

IOPC Deputy Director Joe Nichols said the start of the operation has been moved back to allow the construction of pieces of equipment to be used in the operation.

The Shipowners' Protection Limited, the insurance firm of the sunken tanker Solar 1 and the IOPC has contracted the underwater engineering company Donsub for the operation.

Nichols said they chose Donsub over two other companies because it has an expertise in removing oil from wreckings in deep sea. The Solar 1 lies on the seabed 640 meters deep.

sbma
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY (SBMA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Lot	Name of the	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)
Lot 1	Subic Bay Gateway Park	P 20,000,000.00
Lot 2	Subic Bay Gateway Park	P 20,000,000.00
Lot 3	Subic Bay Gateway Park	P 20,000,000.00

Prospective bidders must be duly licensed Filipino citizens/organizations or joint ventures with at least seventy percent (70%) Filipino ownership and must have the capability and experience to undertake the project, as stated in the Philippine Government's Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, Procurement Management Department, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Building 229, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given above during office hours from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be acquired by interested bidders on the dates given above from the address given above upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of P5,000.00 (Five Thousand Pesos).

For more information, please refer to:

ATTY. ALFREDO M. AMANDO
BAC Chairman

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on December 4, 2006, 9:00 a.m., 14th Floor, Head A. Ejercito Building at the DBP Head Office, Makati Business Center, corner Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. and Makati Ave., Makati City, for the following properties on AS-IS WHERE IS basis:

LOT NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (SQ.M.)	LOCATION	MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE				
METRO MANILA				
BP-07-01	House and lot (TCT No. T-68831)	90	Lot 5 Blk. 3, Phase 1A, Villa Loloma Commercial Bldg., Pinyahan, Quezon City	P 750,000.00
BP-07-02	House and lot (TCT No. T-68832)	90	Lot 6 Blk. 3, Phase 1A, Villa Loloma Commercial Bldg., Pinyahan, Quezon City	P 750,000.00
BP-07-03	House and lot (TCT No. T-68833)	110	Lot 1, Blk. 1, Phase 1A, Villa Loloma Commercial Bldg., Pinyahan, Quezon City	P 900,000.00
BP-07-04	House and lot (TCT No. T-68834)	110	Lot 2, Blk. 1, Phase 1A, Villa Loloma Commercial Bldg., Pinyahan, Quezon City	P 1,000,000.00
CORDILLERA ADM.				
BP-07-05	Residential lot (TCT No. T-68835)	300	Bldg. Tabuk, Dis. Tabuk, Kalinga	P 600,000.00
REGION I				
BP-07-06	Industrial lot (TCT No. T-68836)	500	Lot 11 Blk. 7 Phase III, Pan-Mic Indust'l Park, Brgy. Pugaro Suit, Tuba, Benguet	P 750,000.00
BP-07-07	House and lot (TCT No. T-68837)	100	Residential Dr., Nueva Ecija, Bongabon	P 375,000.00
BP-07-08	House and lot (TCT No. T-68838)	100	Lot 10 Blk. 3, Jessica Subd. II, Talavera, N. Ecija	P 300,000.00
LEASING				
BP-07-09	House and lot (TCT No. T-68839)	80	Lot 5 Blk. 10, St. Joseph Village, Brgy. Tabacao, Legazpi City	P 600,000.00
BP-07-10	10 Commercial Stall Site Stall No. 1 (Lot 1, Blk. 1) Stall No. 2 (Lot 2, Blk. 1) Stall No. 3 (Lot 3, Blk. 1) Stall No. 4 (Lot 4, Blk. 1) Stall No. 5 (Lot 5, Blk. 1) Stall No. 6 (Lot 6, Blk. 1) Stall No. 7 (Lot 7, Blk. 1) Stall No. 8 (Lot 8, Blk. 1) Stall No. 9 (Lot 9, Blk. 1) Stall No. 10 (Lot 10, Blk. 1)	110	Lot 11 Blk. 1, Phase III, Pinyahan Site, Brgy. Tawang, Bacolod City	P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00 P 600,000.00
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL				
BP-07-11	Residential lot (TCT No. T-68840)	1,110	Lot 7 Blk. 3, Dumaguete Subd., Brgy. Tanjungan, Bacolod City	P 600,000.00
VISAYAS				
BP-07-12	House & lot (TCT No. T-68841)	240	Lot 3 Blk. 1, Dr. Jesus Delgado Subd., Poblacion Zone 1, Iloilo City	P 570,000.00
MINDANAO				
BP-07-13(a)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68842)	90	Lot 1 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(b)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68843)	90	Lot 2 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(c)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68844)	90	Lot 3 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(d)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68845)	90	Lot 4 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(e)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68846)	90	Lot 5 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(f)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68847)	90	Lot 6 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(g)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68848)	90	Lot 7 Blk. 1A, Bonbonon Subd., Brgy. Bonbonon, Cagayan de Oro City	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(h)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68849)	90	Lot 8 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(i)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68850)	90	Lot 9 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-13(j)	House & lot (TCT No. T-68851)	90	Lot 10 Blk. 1A	P 150,000.00
BP-07-14	Residential lot (TCT No. T-68852)	1,000	Lapasan Subd., Brgy. Bonbonon, Cagayan de Oro City	P 1,000,000.00
BP-07-15	Residential lot (TCT No. T-68853)	1,000	Lapasan Subd., Brgy. Bonbonon, Cagayan de Oro City	P 1,000,000.00
CHATTELS				
BP-07-16(a)	1 unit Lytec Machine, CNC-001		c/o Datamex Compound, Edsa-Shaw, Mandaluyong City	P 50,000.00
BP-07-16(b)	1 unit Program Station Router		c/o Datamex Compound, Edsa-Shaw, Mandaluyong City	P 140,000.00
BP-07-16(c)	1 unit Vertical Milling Machine, Model VMC-1		c/o Datamex Compound, Edsa-Shaw, Mandaluyong City	P 150,000.00
BP-07-16(d)	1 unit Vertical Milling Machine, Model VMC-1		c/o Datamex Compound, Edsa-Shaw, Mandaluyong City	P 150,000.00
BP-07-17	Various office furniture and equipment (all items to be sold as a lot, see Annex "A" for complete list)		Bldg. Tuna, Davao	P 1,000,000.00
BP-07-18	Various office furniture and equipment (all items to be sold as a lot, see Annex "A" for complete list)		Bldg. Tuna, Davao	P 1,000,000.00

MINIMUM BID REQUIREMENTS:

1. To register and participate in subsequent bids, prospective bidders submit the following:
   a. Duly accomplished Bid Form (Annex "B") with Bid Bond (Cashier's/Manager's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit or Surety Bond) equivalent to 10% of the Minimum Bid;
   b. Duly accomplished Undertaking (Annex "C") consisting of 3 pages; and
   c. Valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit.
2. The DBP reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect therein and accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank. The decision of the Bank is final and unappealable.
3. Interested bidders may contact Ms. Rosemarie Cruz at telephone nos. 818-9511 loc. 2276 or 818-9511 loc. 2277 or fax no. 818-9511 loc. 2278 for more information.

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Allies, foes say no to unity ticket

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

A PROPOSAL TO FORM AN Administration-backed "unity ticket," which could include captured former senator Gregorio Honasan for the 2007 midterm elections, has created grumblings among President Macapagal-Arroyo's political allies and denunciations from the opposition.

Senate Senator Heherson T. Alvarez said the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats essential deeply to the proposal of Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor for the administration to take in a few opposition foes in its 12-member senatorial slate, specifically jailed rebel plotter Honasan whom he called a "criminal suspect."

"Why, after spending so much money and effort to capture Honasan, would the government want to get him on its senatorial slate," said Alvarez in a press statement yesterday.

Defensor, a member of the Liberal Party (Kampi wing), said Dec. under Iron Honasan, the government was exploring the possibility of enrolling former Senator Sonia Aquino-Oreta, Actor Estrada and ex-electrician senator Ralph Recto, French Sangliano and Edgardo Angara (or his son Rep. Sonia Edgardo Angara) to bolster the administration's bid to gain control of the Senate.

Opportunism

The move to take in Honasan "reeks of political opportunism, a bad modelling for political parties and reflects very poor respect for our system of justice," told Alvarez in a press statement.

"It is unfortunate, and even more the tragic if we set such standards for electing candidates—supplanting the members of people who have been unveiled by law enforcers. We are not looking for saints, but for at most proven athletes who have a breath with the law or who have survived prosecution from public conduct."

Alvarez, in an interview with Inquirer, was more on the other opposition candidates named by Defensor, "So far as we are concerned, our (Lakas) door's know of any unity slate," said Alvarez, who admitted to his own aims to remain in the Senate.

Alvarez added that the President might not even endorse a common slate since she is not running for office unlike in 2004. "She is giving her political allies more leeway to field their candidates," he said.

'Desperate'

On the other side of the political fence, former Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also rebuffed Malacañang on its proposed "unity ticket," dismissing it as a "desperate attempt to ensure political survival."

The opposition also wants Honasan, who is facing new rebellion charges.

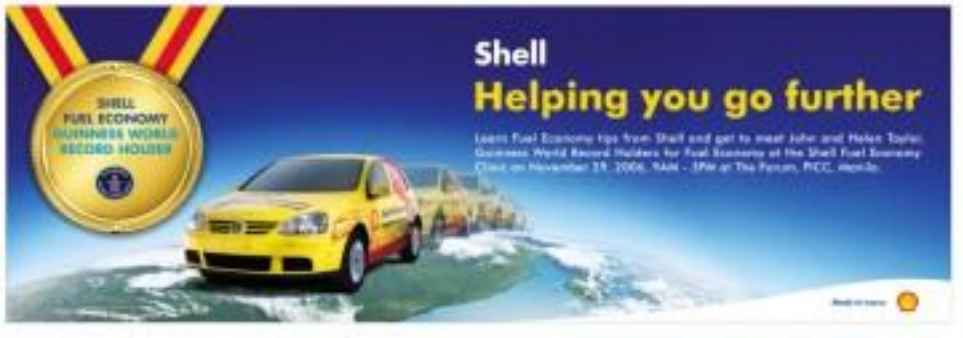
Pimentel, in his own press statement, predicted that the proposed would "savor on the high of the Presidential election" to all opposition parties, including former President Estrada's Pwersa ng Masa, had already shown signs of a senatorial slate for next year's mid-term elections—and it includes Honasan.

Other names said to be on the opposition coalition list are Pangilinan, Sotto, Rep. Benigno "Bitoon" Aquino III, Pimentel's son Aquilino III, Senate President Manuel Villar, Recto, former Senator Loren Legarda, Vicente Sotto III, Honasan, Osmeña and Enrile. Also considered are Representatives Panfilo Lacson, Alan Peter Cayetano and Jun-Jun Magsaysay.

The coalition includes Estrada's PMP Militant's Nacionalista Party and Franklin Drilon's LP wing, among others.

"If most opposition parties had turned down Mrs. Arroyo's past overtures for representation of national unity or coalition government, there is good reason for them to reject the newly concocted idea of a unity ticket," said Pimentel's statement.

While it would be a mere ploy to "test the waters," the proposal showed that Malacañang seemed to "accept its opponents" and "weaken its political survival," the source said.



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Solon accused of striking waitress

Pork dish served angered Lanao congresswoman

DUMAPAN: Pressed over pork

By Dj Yap

A MUSLIM CONGRESSWOMAN WHO UNknowingly ate pork at a dinner in the House of Representatives allegedly slapped and threatened a waitress with a bread knife for serving her the dish.

Lanao Del Sur Rep. Bayanda Dumarpa is facing possible criminal charges after the waitress, Virginia Alcantarea, 36, lodged a complaint against her at a police station over the Nov. 29 incident.

Sought for a reaction, Dumarpa said it was true that her attention got the better of her that night, but denied that she caused violence.

"Everybody knows that Muslims are forbidden from eating pork. It's not just a matter of culture but of faith," she told the Inquirer.

According to the blotter at the Batasan Hills Police Station, Dumarpa, 54, was eating with colleagues at the Bistek Wing lounge of the Batasang Pambansa complex when the incident occurred.

The congresswoman had asked the catering crew from Shangri-la Plaza Restaurant if there were pork in one of the dishes on the buffet table, police said.

When the crew assured her that the dishes were pork-free, Dumarpa started eating her meal but was upset when a Muslim colleague informed her that the noodles contained pork.

Dumarpa reportedly vented her anger on Alcantarea when she allegedly slapped repeatedly and, at one point, threatened with a bread knife, said investigator SPO1 Andres Iscoth, quoting witnesses.

She only stopped when colleagues stepped in to calm her down, the complainant said.

Asked if it was true that she slapped the waitress or threatened her with a knife, Dumarpa said: "That's just her allegation. Anyone can make accusations."

"I was fetching a glass of water when I confronted them, and to my anger, I threw it on the floor. But I did not throw it at them," she said.

She added that she was about to take her medication for hypertension when it happened, which could explain her reaction.

Dumarpa said she was willing to face "whatever would be the consequence" of her actions, even if she had to go to court.

Alcantarea told police that she would consult her superiors about her legal options, and had not yet decided if she would press charges against the congresswoman.

Should Alcantarea decide to take the case to court, she may file charges of slight physical injuries and grave threats against Dumarpa, Asort said.

Claudine pregnant, says Raymart

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ENDING WEEKS OF SPECULATION, ACTRESS Claudine Barretto's husband, actor Raymart Santiago admitted yesterday that his wife is pregnant.

The news was also confirmed by Santiago's manager Sandy Santamaria and Nikko Dylim of Star Magic, the talent management arm of television network ABS-CBN 2, where Barretto is under contract.

"He sounded very excited when he relayed the news (to me)," Santamaria said.

In a phone interview with the Inquirer, Santiago said he and Claudine had been waiting for this "happy news for the past three months."

"We've been going to the doctor for three months now. This afternoon, after two visits to the hospital, our doctor told us that the result was positive," he added.

The actor was just a final verification because Santiago had noticed that his wife had been craving for green mangoes lately. "This was unusual because she couldn't drink craving me since before. Since she saw Bench three managers!" After getting the test results, the couple gathered their closest friends for a celebration last night.

Barretto and Santiago's nuptials in Tagaytay Highlands on March 27 was dubbed the "Wedding of the Year" by the local media.

Will their condition affect her work in films?

"She will continue working for as long as she can," Santiago said. "But I don't want her to work until the early morning hours. She will follow whatever the doctor will recommend."

DID YOU KNOW

BASILISA, originally called San Jose de Navotas, used to be part of Malabon City. It was declared separate from Malabon in 1908, when a superior decree made by the uniquely under true Matias Reyes Navotas, however, became town in 1960, and the newly created province of Rizal. Three years later, it was again separated with Malabon. Finally, in 1968, Navotas became a separate municipality.

Navotas has an aggregate land area of almost 4.3 kilometers. Around 60 percent of the municipality's 1,200 hectare land area has been converted into fishponds and salt, while about 25 percent (900 hectare) is for residential spaces.

Cyril Jhonkevin Jupiter Esquerra

Boxing center in his name, warm welcome await Manny

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANILA GOVERNMENT WILL rename one of the city's sports complexes after boxing idol Manny Pacquiao who beat Mexican drug legend Erik "El Terrible" Morales in their much-awaited rematch last Sunday in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The San Andres Sports Complex and Little Center in Malate will be renamed Manny Pacquiao Sports Center, said Mayor Lito Atienza, adding that this can be the process of preparing a rousing welcome for the city's adopted son when he comes home later this week.

"The humble tribute to our boxing hero will serve as a continuing inspiration to all city residents, especially the youth, to be the best they can possibly be as shown by Pacquiao over and over again," he said in a statement.

The San Andres Sports Complex has been the site of various sports activities in Manila, including boxing matches such as Sunday's "Pacquiao vs Morales III: The Grand Finale" shown live-coverage screens inside the center for free.

Thousands of residents watched the much-awaited super featherweight bout that took place at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. The fight was also viewed live in other venues in Manila like the Disney Aquino Studium, Robinsons Galleria and Ayala Mercedes Rotunda Stadium in Ilo-Ilo.

Manila Sports Council chair Arnold Atienza added that Pacquiao had long offered to help in the city government's sports programs.

"Having him help train our young boxers will definitely boost our boxing program in the city," the young Atienza added.

Earlier, the Manila government said a state-of-the-art boxing gymnasium would be set up in the city-owned Rizal Provincial Complex in Kalilayan City to help aspiring young Filipino boxers.

"The city government is embarking on an ambitious program to discover and develop future Filipino world boxing champions like Manny," Atienza said, adding that boxing "scholars" would be chosen from street children or those who come from poor families.

METRO BRIEFS

3 laborers hurt

THREE construction workers sustained minor burns when their co-worker touched a live wire while erecting a billboard structure along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City yesterday. POLICE said the victims, identified as Ricardo Mallorca, Jovanito Abon and Rolando Balajot, were injured when they came in contact with a live wire while erecting the billboard structure at around 10:30 a.m. The victims suffered second degree burns on their hands and were rushed to the Philippine General Hospital for treatment. Rainy F. Carvajal

Score one for MMDA

AN OFFICIAL of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday lauded the Supreme Court decision affirming the legality of its "number coding scheme," as total dissolution appears that a temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Supreme Court last year by former Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo against the scheme is straightforward. The agency's authority to implement a coding traffic scheme has been upheld by the Supreme Court. "Ito ang desisyon na matagal nang hinihintay ng mga motorista (This is the decision that motorists have been waiting for)," said Atty. Romando Artes, MMDA general manager. Artes said the high court decision will help solve the traffic problem in Metro Manila. "Ang pagsisikip ng trapiko sa Metro Manila ay isang malaking problema na kailangang solusyunan (Traffic congestion in Metro Manila is a big problem that needs to be solved)," he said. Artes said the MMDA will continue to implement the coding scheme to help ease traffic in the metropolis. Jaime B. Laude

Manila stall owners face raps for selling fake products

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU of Investigation (NBI) seized more than P2 million worth of counterfeit apparel during simultaneous raids in the city of Manila last week.

The NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) conducted Saki Mart, Lee and E-C Centers products from a stall owned by Albert Go on Ongpin-Indigue Streets, Binondo, and four stalls owned by Good Guy General Merchandising on Bayo Street, Binondo, Manila.

The raids were conducted last Nov. 17 by virtue of search warrants issued by Judge Reynaldo Ros of the Manila Regional Trial Court, according to NBI-IPRD chief Jose Jesus Boy.

Go and the other owners of the establishments now face charges of trademark infringement and unfair competition, Boy added.

Confiscated items also seized P100,000 worth of counterfeit Spring 1000 toothbrushes during a raid in Binondo last Nov. 8.

NBI-IPRD agents confiscated 2,851 pieces of the fake items from stalls and warehouses on Sto. Cristo and Ramon Bautista Sts. and at the River Binondo Mall in Binondo district.

Charges of unfair competition are now being readied against owners Delfin Crystal Vivian Ang, Yap said.

STAR MAKER

An elderly woman finishes the frame for a Christmas lantern out of bamboo as her stall on Recto Avenue, Quezon City, the busiest premises will be about P25 apiece. AFP, JOHN

CHR to probe torture allegations by suspects in cop's slay

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights has started looking into allegations that police tortured the seven suspects who were arrested for killing a policeman in Muntinlupa City on Friday.

Four officers from the CHR's Forensic and Medical Division went to the police station where the suspects are detained the other day and yesterday, interviewed the suspects one by one and examined their physical condition.

A member of the CHR team said they were prompted to conduct a probe after a relative of one of the suspects called them up to complain about the alleged torture.

Supt. Erwinn Velasquez, Muntinlupa police chief, told the inquirer that they were very much open to the investigation.

He admitted that the suspects had injuries but explained that these could have been sustained during a chase by responding policemen.

Velasquez also confirmed earlier reports that the suspects were members of a "hit squad" sent to Muntinlupa to assassinate a rich businessman.

During interviews with CHR doctors, some of the suspects said the police account of what happened on Friday morning was inaccurate. According to them, they shot PO1 Julio Arbo Asto, who was assigned to one of the city's police community precincts, while he was getting off a passenger jeepney.

The incident happened last Friday at Barangay Ayala Alabang. Five of the suspects were on board the jeep when Asto boarded it and became suspicious of their actions.

After the broadcast, the Lozcano-filed libel charges against Lopez on July 13, 2002, and Oct. 9, 2002, which are still pending before a Quezon City court.

In his complaint, Lopez denied making the statement attributed to him by the Lozcano and the witness, who said he could not remember, "May mga tapa sa mga sasakyang libreseo of the operators Enrique and Geraldine Lozcano. Huwag kayong magpaloko (Don't be conned)."

At court, Lopez included in his complaint a transcript of the show segment. He also said his server implied that he got the information from Faisal himself but from the outside that came out in the tabloid People's Dailies.

Lopez accused the respondents of making unfounded statements that served as the basis for the libel charges they had filed against him.

Comedian in libel suit files perjury raps vs couple, witnesses

LAPUS: Fighting back

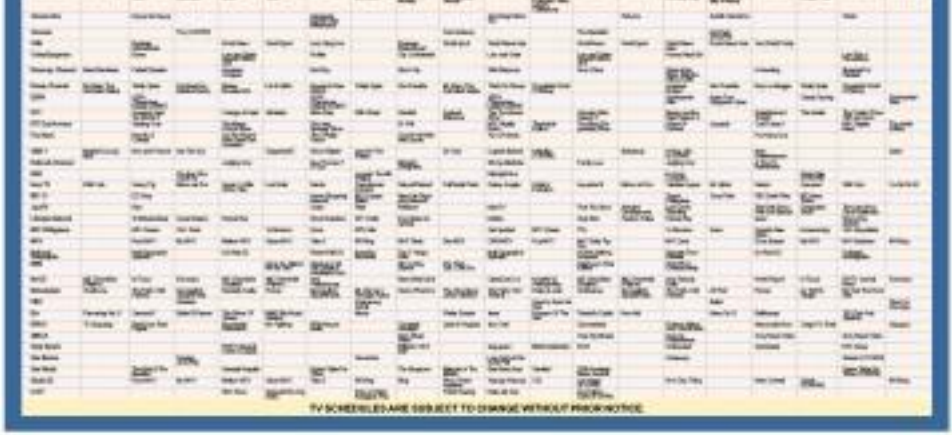
By DJ Yap

COMEDIAN JOSE "HERZT" LAPUS has filed perjury charges against a couple who sued him for libel four years ago and three other persons who had served as their witnesses.

Lapus filed two counts of perjury against spouses Enrique and Geraldine Lozcano and one count each against Lilian Reyes, Marites Benitez and Reynold Calderon in Pasay inquest's complaints in the Quezon City prosecutor's office.

According to the charge sheets, the Lozcano had accused Lapus of maligning them when he ran a TV segment that ran them in a bad light on the ABS-CBN show "The Buzz" on May 5, 2002.

In the segment, Lapus reported on the results shown that actress Sheila Viseo had filed against the Lozano couple over the purchase of a townhouse in Novaliches.



The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quaco

Tax evasion charges mulled vs Thaksin kin

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S ANTICORRUPTION agency is considering criminal charges against the wife and brother-in-law of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra for allegedly failing to pay almost $15 million in taxes, officials said Tuesday.

The head of the National Counter Corruption Committee, Prasobsuk Chonbatsuragul, said the nine-member agency was expected to meet by calling most week, in what could become the first corruption scandal against Thaksin and his family since he was ousted by a military coup Sept. 19.

Thaksin was accused of massive corruption during his two terms in office. Coup leaders cited Thaksin's alleged graft as one of the justifications for the coup, and set up special committees to investigate whether he, his family and close allies could be prosecuted.

The Assets Examination Committee, a team of military-appointed graft investigators, ruled Monday that Thaksin's brother-in-law, Bhanpot Damapong, had to pay a tax bill of 546 million baht ($14.6 million) from a purchase of Ithin Corp. shares in 2003 from one of Thaksin's cronies valued at 758 million baht ($20 million).

Thaksin's wife, Pojaman, bought the shares from a lifetime senator's domestic helper, Buangly Wongpaki, and also paid the original owner's tax on the transaction, said called the purchase a gift for her brother, said Sak Kornsakoraga, sub-superintendent at the NEC.

Thaksin was known to have transferred shares in Shin Corp., his telecommunications empire, to his maid, chauffeur, relatives and others to shed holdings before taking public office.

At the time, the 1997 deal was deemed to be tax-free since it was called "a gift," said Sak. However, a subsequent investigation found that the check issued to Buangly was later deposited to a new bank account belonging to Pojaman, he said.

"Evidence shows that Bhanpot and Pojaman received an illegal activity to avoid paying taxes," Sak said.

The NEC ruled the deal was a hundred from Pojaman to her brother and should be taxed and suggested that those involved face criminal charges, Sak said.

"The committee ruled that Bhanpot should have paid 273 million baht ($7.4 million) in taxes on gains from the same amount, bringing the total to 546 million baht, Sak said.

The National Counter Corruption Committee has been conducting its own parallel investigation.

The NCCC, which can issue an indictment and send the case to court, focused its investigation on 118 people, Somluck said. They include Bhanpot, who faces tax evasion charges, and Thaksin's wife and the maid, who face charges of conspiracy in evading taxes. Seven senior officials from the Revenue Department face charges for dereliction of duty.

The lawyer for Thaksin's family, Noppadol Pattama, said his wife and brother-in-law would fight any charges in court.

"For the moment, there are not yet official charges or an indictment," Noppadol said. "If official charges are filed then [they] are ready to clarify what happened and fight the case in court."

In a separate case, the Revenue Department ruled recently that Thaksin's son and daughter would have to pay taxes on the family's sale of Shin Corp. earlier this year to Temasek Holdings, a Singaporean state-owned company for 73.3 billion baht ($1.9 billion). The children's tax bill has not yet been announced. AP

Solar-power trip across the Atlantic

Losing Mexican bet swears himself in

MEXICO CITY—JOSE QUIROZ, more cons. The losing leftist candidate for president swore himself in on Monday as "the legitimate president of Mexico" before a huge crowd of his avid fans, ignoring calls by federal electoral authorities and the courts that he cannot by law be the chief executive long.

The candidate, leader Manuel Andres Obrador, is former Mexico City mayor who took on Mexico's entrenched oligarchy chose the anniversary of the Mexican revolution for the event. He has continued to assert that his opponents used fraud to deny him victory.

Appearing on a stage in the historic Constitution Plaza, with Mexico flags and an enormous eagle mosaic behind him, he promised to lead the government of the president-elect, Felipe Calderon, a conservative from President Vicente Fox's National Action Party, considering Lopez Obrador's proposals.

About 100,000 people crowded into the square and joined with supporters from across the southern states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas, while such top presidential aides as Interior Secretary Carlos Abascal and Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez looked on from the sidelines.

"We are assembled here to confirm a foundational election," he said, "not to take on a regime of corruption and privileges, to start the construction of a new republic."

Lopez Obrador, who is 53, said he intended to host members of his Democratic Revolution Party lawmakers in Congress, then use public pressure to force the Supreme Court, hearing his arguments on lawsuits he says were unjustified, to give him both time, raise the minimum wage and cut government salaries.

He said he intended to continue touring the countryside, but to do so "peacefully."

Starting a shadow government is unique politically, some analysts said, because it would keep Lopez Obrador in the public eye during Calderon's six years least and set up a possible run in 2012.

New York Times News Service

LOPEZ OBRADOR

WORLDBRIEFS

Sea collision

TOKYO—A Japanese submarine and fishing boat collided in separate incidents carrying training exercises off the country's southern coast, the military said Wednesday. No injuries were reported in the collision, officials said. The Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine Isoshio hit a fishing boat off Kochi prefecture (state) on Shikoku Island, the Defense Agency said. The submarine surfaced and no one was injured, said Takahiro Nagasaki, a spokesman for Kochi. In a separate incident, the submarine Asashio collided with a fishing boat off Nagasaki prefecture on Kyushu Island, the agency said. No one was injured in the collision, which occurred about 1:30 p.m. (0430 GMT), Nagasaki said. AP

Transport blockade

BEIRUT—At least 200 people were wounded in gunbattles between rival activists as opposition blockades force the removal of election officials and shut Hezbollah out of Beirut, an Interior ministry said. The blockades, set up by Hezbollah and its opposition allies, have crippled the capital's economy, which relies heavily on tourism and business. The officials of last Saturday's three-day election ordered a halt there to Saturday. The blockades, which began on December 1, 2006, have been organized by Hezbollah and its allies in the opposition. The blockades, which began on December 1, 2006, have been organized by Hezbollah and its allies in the opposition. The blockades, which began on December 1, 2006, have been organized by Hezbollah and its allies in the opposition. AFP

Train blast

KOLKATA—At least five people were killed and 70 wounded when explosives ripped through a train in eastern India, police said. The blast hit two crowded coaches near a remote railway station in West Bengal state, about 200 kilometers north of state capital Kolkata. Raj Kanojia, a spokesman of the SRI Railway, "It seems to be a powerful bomb and the casualties could exceed as the count increases," Kanojia said. The train took place around 6:30 p.m. when the train was approaching the station in the area's Burdwan district. Reuters

Plot to bomb Israeli plane probed

BERLIN—GERMAN AUTHORITIES are investigating a group of people in connection with a plot they suspect was a foiled plot to smuggle a bomb onto a passenger plane, prosecutors said on Wednesday.

German security sources said on condition of anonymity the plane would have been a Swissair flight to national Airport, one of the world's busiest. One source confirmed German media reports that the target was a plane belonging to Israel's El Al airline.

An El Al spokesperson in Israel said the airline's plane had not received warnings about security matters.

Federal prosecutors in Karlsruhe said they were investigating six suspects whom they had identified and a number of unidentified suspects.

None of the names or details of the suspects have been made public, although a security source told Reuters the suspects were from Jordan, Israel and Iraq. Six Egyptian-born suspects reported that most were Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

Arrests of the suspects had apprehended someone carrying the same explosive who had access to the security department on a German airport and who had expressed willingness to smuggle a suitcase or bag onto a plane for payment, a source said.

The suspects reportedly made contact with the person they were unable to agree on a price for planting a bomb, it said.

The NBR said the person was a male employee of Frankfurt airport.

"The suspects were temporarily taken into custody and informed of the suspicions against them before they were released on remedies, with the exception of one remand in connection with another crime," the office said.

The men are suspected of being members of a terrorist organization, the office said. It did not explain why the suspects, who remain under investigation, had been released.

"I can't comment on the particulars about the decision to release them," said a spokesperson for the German Embassy.

German BND foreign intelligence agency also declined comment.

The prosecutor's office could not say how many apartments or flights in the country German states of Baden-Württemberg and Hesse to probe evidence.

Four arrested men were convicted in a German court last year of plotting to bomb Jewish targets in Berlin and Duesseldorf in 2002 under orders from the late leader of al Qaida during the Month Al Qaeda, who was killed by the US military in June.

Police uncovered a failed plot by two young Lebanese men to detonate suitcase bombs on trains in western Germany in July.

A Hamburg-based al Qaida cell has been blamed for the Sept. 11, 2001, hijacked plane attacks on the United States. Since then, Germany has cracked down on Muslim militants and has put on trial a number of radical Islamists. Reuters

Kathmandu Post joins Asian News Network

BANGKOK—KATHMANDU POST, Nepal's top English-language daily, has joined Asia News Network as a member.

The latest acquisition brings the number of member newspapers to 16 from 14 countries.

The ANN is an organization of leading newspapers in Asia with daily exchanges of news, exchanges of journalists, publication of a weekly news magazine and a host of other media activities.

Kathmandu Post is Nepal's oldest English daily and is part of the Kantipur group, which brings out Kantipur Times, a Nepali daily and soon Kantipur Radio and Kantipur TV.

Prakash Upadhaya, editor of the Kathmandu Post, said: "We wish to become an active member of the network, taking advantage of the available news reports, features and articles, and contributing our resources for others' benefit."

Crack police take on Russian spy poisoning case

LONDON, BRITAIN PUT ITS crack antiterrorism police unit on the case of a former Russian spy, who was fighting for his life on Monday after being poisoned in what his friends called a Kremlin-orchestrated plot.

Russia dismissed as "pure nonsense" suggestions it had ordered the murder of former agent Alexander Litvinenko, 41, who now spokes at the Russian Embassy in London.

Evidence of a Kremlin hand in such an incident on British soil would have far-reaching diplomatic consequences at a time of mounting concern in the West at Moscow's human rights record.

Litvinenko climbed into a hospital bed at the beginning of the month after falling ill and was moved to another hospital when his medical condition worsened.

Toxicology reports now show he was poisoned by thallium, a chemical weapon that can cause a slow, painful death over the course of weeks or months, even with treatment.

Doctors informed of him on Monday he received him as suspected medical equipment in hospital, were told. Hair loss is one of thallium's effects.

The hospital said Litvinenko's condition had deteriorated slightly overnight and he had been transferred to the intensive care. Friends say he has only a 50-50 chance of surviving.

Police say they were called in to the case only last week—two days after Litvinenko fell ill—and are investigating whether he was deliberately poisoned.

They said in a statement that the counterterrorism branch of London's Metropolitan police had taken over the case.

Officers were interviewing people who had contact with Litvinenko before he took sick and examining dozens exhibits, including pictures.

Alexander Goldfarb, who helped Litvinenko defect to Britain six years ago, told Reuters the former spy was the victim of a plot directed from the heart of the Russian government.

"This is a criminal-backed operation of Russian intelligence services—whether it goes to the top of the Kremlin or to the top of the Russian intelligence services," said Goldfarb, himself a Russian dissident who now has UK citizenship.

In Moscow, deputy Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov replied: "There is no need to comment on statements that are pure nonsense." An FSB spokesperson declined comment and the Russian embassy in London described Litvinenko's case as an "accident."

Litvinenko has said he fell ill after meeting a source at a sushi restaurant in Mayfair, central London, and Italian security expert Mario Scaramella, who was also there. Reuters

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SPORTS
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Pacquiao manager wants Barrera next

PACQUIAO: Pistol prefers Barrera fight.

By Francis Cidron

LAS VEGAS—IT MAY NOT BE THE FIGHT ON the horizon right now, but Manny Pacquiao's manager, Shelly Finkel, believes that the next step for the Filipino ring sensation should be Marco Antonio Barrera.

"It's the best fight for [Pacquiao] right now," said Finkel, alluding to rejuvenated ex-fight with WBC super featherweight champion Barrera at

...for from the present.

Top Rank Promotions, which recently won the rights over to pro-

PACQUIAO A30

PACMAN'S LIKELY NEXT FOE

Valero who?

ON PAPER, VENEZUELAN EDWIN VALERO is the world's strongest junkie in his class. He knocked out his first 15 opponents in the first round, surpassing the previous best of 13 con-

VALERO A34 VALERO: 28 KOs

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Castro powers Hapee to 3rd straight victory

By Jeanvive W. Pays

JASON CASTRO PLAYED THE HERO'S role in this MCI move to Hapee PCU rallied over the Texas Super Steelers, 71-66, yesterday, and claimed the sole lead in the PBL 3-Bow Cup yesterday at the Filbusters Sport Center in Parañaque.

Castro, who teamed up with forward Mark Barkisova in the final term, dished out 15 points, nine rebounds, four assists and five steals in a performance that drew easy glances from rival team coach Arnie.

Barkisova posed Hapee-PCU's third straight victory with 27 points and 10 boards.

"We had a good start (in the fourth quarter)," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel. "Even if we made several turnovers, in the end, the composure of the boys was still there."

In the second game, the Cebuana Gasoline Pete Pablo Moore team skated from beyond the arc in the entire period for an 80-65 decision of pre-seasoned rookie Reginald Igdanan.

A quick slump in overtime highlighted by triples from Rocky Escobina, Mark Abrelo and Emil dela Cuesta lifted the Moneymen to an 85-77 edge heading into the last two minutes.

Sino joined Cebuana Lhuillier in second spot with 3-1 slates, while Magnolia doubled to an ice-cold straight loss.

The scores:

Red Game

HAPEE-PCU (71)—Barkisova 27, Castro 15, Dominguez 8, Jimenez 7, Cruz 5, Rivera 3, Ilano 2, Ramos 2, Bautista 2, Reyes 0, Ramos 0, Zamil 0.

TEXAS (66)—Wayne 19, Gregorio 12, Ritz 12, Mahmood 5, Rivera 5, Arellano 3, Salina 3, Abel 2, Flores 0.

Quarters: 20-15, 35-32, 57-53, 71-66

Second Game

CEBUANA LHUILLIER (85)—Arao 23, Escalona 19, Abrelo 13, Santos 9, Dela Cuesta 9, Samonte 7, Sevi, Balog 3, Gonzales 2, Jumpad 0, Orbeta, Ubando 0.

MAGNOLIA (65)—Ingosan 18, Ignacio 16, Rosa 11, Gamalinda 10, Villanueva 9, Jocson 2, Diaz 1, Rivera 0, Escobina 0, Ramos 0, Bautista 0, Ingalla 0, Tenorio 0.

Quarters: 25-11, 42-25, 63-43, 85-65, (OT)

SUPPORT. Jason Castro (left) of Hapee-PCU drives off Lawrence Ramos of Texas in yesterday's battle of PBL leaders. PHOTO BY BOY

Barako take on Giants for solo second

SEE HULL AND PURE

Goods, two of three teams locked in a tie for second spot, step it out today with the Barako eager to suit up center Ramon Villanueva this time around Talk 'N' Text PBA Philippine Cup collision at the Araneta Coliseum.

Guesting at 7:30 p.m. with the fates of Villanueva and Coca-Colas Joseph Yeo still hanging.

The duo, who figured in a pushing-for-shuffle bunch, patched things up in a meeting yesterday at the Commissioner's Office.

Petron and the 24-23 try to get back on track to stay the first game at 4:35 p.m., with the Tongues shooting for a win that would pull them out of the cellar.

Purefoods, which outlasted Red Bull in an classic game to win this title the last time out, last won six of its last seven games.

"There are no worries (playing) against Red Bull, really respect," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

Villanueva, the talented six-footer ace, reportedly swung at Yeo in the dressing Coliseum parking lot on Sunday and hit Michael Gordon instead. The melee was broken by members of the Big Brothers and Wife.

Summoned by commissioner Bob Eala, Villanueva was ordered to have refused to be held down in the conference room with Yeo.

They talked cool down to 30 minutes.

"What's important is that they have sealed their fend," Wille Marcial, PBA executive director quoted Kahlo as saying. "The president told me will levy no more severities." Manong B. Gomillo

STANDINGS	W	L
Sta. Lucia	3	1
Red Bull	2	4
Barako	2	4
Purefoods	2	4
Talk N Text	2	5
San Miguel	1	5
Alaska	1	5
Petron	1	5
Coca-Cola	1	5

BARKO'S TODAY
(At Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Petron vs Alaska
7:30 p.m.—Barako vs Purefoods

NBC: Valencia overpowers Cellular dribblers

VALENCIA CITY—VALENCIA GOLDEN Flowers bounced to a 105-98 victory over the visiting Cellular Batangas Monday night in the 2006 Spring Cooking Oil NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the jampacked city gymnasium.

Hal Cruz, Elisha "Bobot" Bernas and Bo Cummings combined for 47 points to propel Mayor Jose Galvez Jr.'s Golden Blossom to their fourth win in five games.

Cruz had 18 points and 11 rebounds while Bernas, the 2005 rookie of the year, added 16 points and five rebounds and rookie Cummings chipped in 13 markers.

Businessman Pedro Montes's Cellular suffered their ninth straight defeat.

After a closely fought first half, Valencia came out firing from all angles to open a seven double-digit advantages in the third quarter.

Montes was led by as many as 29 points at the start of the quarter period.

Orlando Cebu and Bagulbas are still playing at presstime last night.

Scores:

VALENCIA (105)—Cruz 18, Bernas 16, Dagoc 13, Bautista 11, Cummings 13, Dingal 12, Antiporda 11, Cano 7, Bernas 2, Dela 2.

CELLULAR (98)—Antonio 37, Jaucel 17, Dela Rosa 16, Tolentino 13, Ico 11, Rivera 10, Ambas 4, Tenido 0, Tongcuan 1, Dela 0.

Quarters: 25-22, 53-43, 77-62, 105-98

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Holiday package for Nat'l clubs badminton winner

FROM THE BADMINTON COURT TO THE beach and vice? Why not?

A multi-talented team and other rewards will be given to this year's champion of the Banko ng Pilipinas Interclub Badminton Cup.

A trip to any local holiday destination will be the grand prize of the prestigious club event, while it will also be giving away lifetime gift certificates to the top finishers.

Only 12 teams remain for the closing rounds, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. tomorrow at the Filoil Flying V Arena in Legaspi.

Cesafe Academy will be shooting for its second straight championship after its humble debut last year.

The 12-qualifiers led by Greg Lobregat, Bernalyn Mendoza Badminton Center, top 2 veteran Manila Polo Club and top 10 Bike The Zone, were divided into four groups this season.

Teams in the group will compete in a single round-robin play. The top two clubs from each group will advance to the quarterfinals.

A knockout format will be implemented in the succeeding rounds of the tournament presented by Inspirasi Badminton together with Mark Fitness Nation and Mizuno.

The Manila Polo Club, Manila Pitu Badminton Center and the PNP Badminton Court will take it up in Group 1.

Figuring in Group 2 action will be Club 600, Quezon City Sports Club and the Racquet Sports Club Premium.

A powerhouse battle among Excalibur, Cesafe, Alberto, Valle Verde Country Club and Bonanza Manila will represent Group 3.

The Zone, last year's runner-up, also has a tough challenge against Group 4 competitors Alabang Racquet Club and Excel Badminton Center.

Jeanvive W. Pays

Pacquiao manager . . .

From page A-19

mote Pacquiao, is not too keen on the fight and plans another bout in Macau against a still unnamed opponent.

"This Diaconon still is the fight that can bring in the money for Manny," said Roach.

Reuters, part of the entity of Mexicans boxing gods that Pacquiao had all vote to the contest, is promoted by Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions.

The outfit had tried to lure Pacquiao away from the Bob Arum-headed Top Rank, which promotes Pacquiao's fights.

Top Rank has hinted that the Macau bout could be against Mexican knockout artist Juan Manuel Marquez (Jan Odlum prediction: 60%).

Hatfield said there is a lot of money to be issued before a Reuters match can be worked out. On top of that, he is the impending lawsuit Golden Boy is set to file against Top Rank over this week.

"Reuters's going to be a lawsuit for sure and it's sad because Manny doesn't need these kind of things at a time when he should be on top of the world," Hatfield said.

A source said Golden Boy has an up-fight case against Top Rank because it holds a contract signed by Pacquiao. Golden Boy signed Pacquiao to a seven-fight deal last September when Pacquiao advised in Los Angeles to contract for his United States bout against Erik "El Terrible" Morales.

Pacquiao won that fight last June after Cheetah vs Morales 1 at the Thomas & Mack Arena, sending the Mexican contender known as "El Terrible" shelter to the corners, the last at the 2:37 mark of the fifth round that sealed the fight.

After the match, Reuters announced that Top Rank was keeping Pacquiao after the two parties agreed to a four-year deal.

Valero, Pacman's likely . . .

From page A-19

socialite first round KO'd posted by Ronny Diaz.

Mexican Genaro Trazancos ended Valero's streak by surviving until the second round last March.

Valero won the WBA super featherweight title by beating Panamanian Hector Mesquera via a 10th round TKO. This he did after receiving a third-round knockdown. In January 2004, Valero failed a brain scan in New York and was banned from fighting in the United States. The abnormalities detected are a result of a head injuries he sustained in a motorcycle accident in 2003.

Ayala Alabang bags Nokia golf crown

DALAO, LAGUNA (SECOND LD WRITE-THROUGH) subject on 8th scores to capture the overall crown in the 2006 Nokia Cup inter-shop golf championship at the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna Monday. Five players shot out 54 points to Ayala Alabang—including Nokia Philippines's sales rep Alex Abella 39 for the 3rd overall GTR. Makiapoli — who bowed 113 to outshoot Hilarion eagle by three points. Other 39-point scorers for the championship were Mark Baum, Alex Escalona, Jesus Fungo and Ruby de Rivo. Dante Ramirez, Rodrigo Hugos and Jacinto Nikon chipped in 38, 37 and 36, respectively. Hilarion eagle, by the three 5th of Nova Cochran, Philip Bonilla and Roland Pena, posted 105 for a 909 total to edge Ayala by 6 Division scores for the second meet among the golfing shops in Metro Manila. SF Vincent Villegas, who bowed the 9th hole divisional 7th, placed second at 8 Division with a 107 after a 188 while Raul Villegas had a 203-676 and scored top third. Jesus Hermosa and Nikolai Alan, led by Chan Domingo (8 cards), outshoot the rally by Le Hilario to cop the 8 Division title with a 107 after a 187. Le Hilario had 108.

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Onischuk gets company on top; Antonio pulls out

GM Onischuk plays a move against Cisneros GM Zhang in a Game 6 Rifth round match. AFP PHOTO

Big world boxing debut for Aparri; Martinez wins

Corteza tops All Japan tilt, pockets P1M

CORTEZA

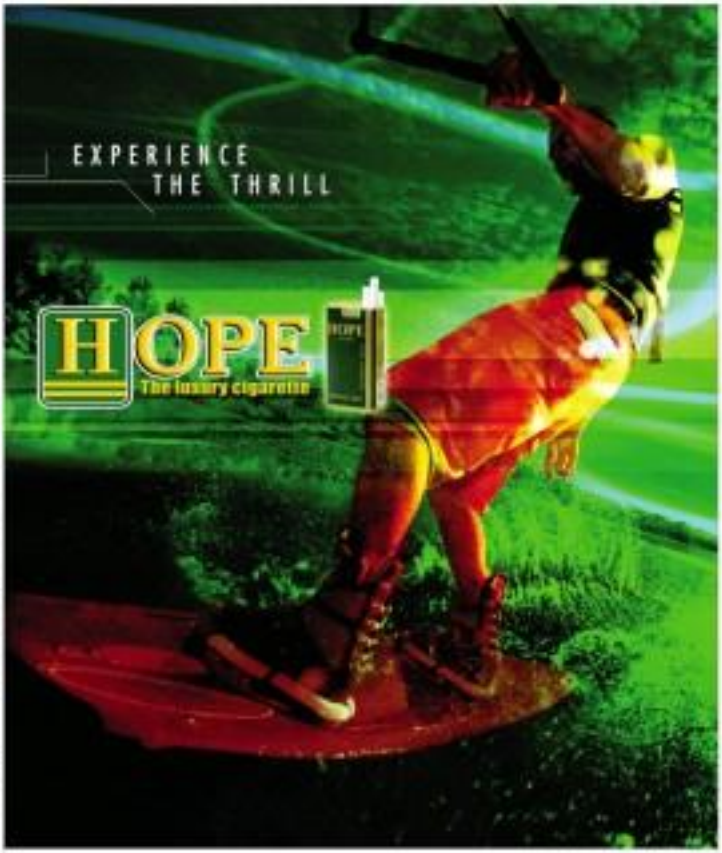
Doves, Maroons score

SPORTSWATCH

Navaliches-CdO pulls away Asian Rotary Golf crown

UBBA backs Religon derby

SJC Circuit finals set going



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SPORTS

Thorpe calls it quits

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC superstar Ian Thorpe, regarded as one of the greatest swimmers of all time, announced Tuesday that he was retiring from his record-breaking career at the age of 24.

The powerful "Thorpedo," who won legions of fans around the world as he raced to his trademark blitzkrieg, said he was quitting to take a long holiday and to take stock of his life.

After losing injury, illness and boredom about his motivation ahead of the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Thorpe said a training stint in Los Angeles this year had focused his mind on his future as a man, rather than as a swimmer.

"As I got fit physically, my mind also got fit, I started asking a lot of questions. I started looking at myself not only as a swimmer but as a person," he told a news conference.

"Next for me is to look at it as you can swim lap after lap staring at a black line and all of a sudden you look up and see what's around you. That's what it feels like to me."

Thorpe, who stands 1.90 cm tall and has massive flippers—size 17 feet, won three gold and two silver medals at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 when he was just 17.

He went on to win two Olympic golds in Athens in 2004, in far beyond 200- and 400-meter freestyle. His total Olympic medals are 11 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze. He won 11 golds at three FINA World Championships and 10 Commonwealth Games gold. AFP

Thorpedo'd out?

Mavs, Rockets zoom

NEW YORK—JASON NASH[illegible] led Dallas to a 93-85 road triumph over the Charlotte Bobcats Monday, the Mavericks winning a [illegible] straight game after dropping the first four of the season.

The German power forward scored 24 points and hooked down 11 rebounds for the Mavericks, who triumphed despite shooting just 39 percent from the field.

The Mavericks also raised 13 free throws, but Josh Howard's 11 three-point attempts and dominated the boards, out-rebounding the Bobcats, 48-37, to lead Charlotte a much less in the last seven games.

Devin Harris added 17 points for the Mavericks, who squandered 18- and nine-point leads in the third quarter before finally pulling away late in the game.

Emeka Okafor had 22 points and 13 rebounds for Charlotte, and set a franchise record with eight blocks.

Jim Ming had 16 points and nine rebounds to lead the Houston Rockets past the New York Knicks, 97-90. Tracy McGrady added 24 points for Houston. Reuters

Complete Results

CHRIS Newsdaily Enterprise

ST TOPCHRIS

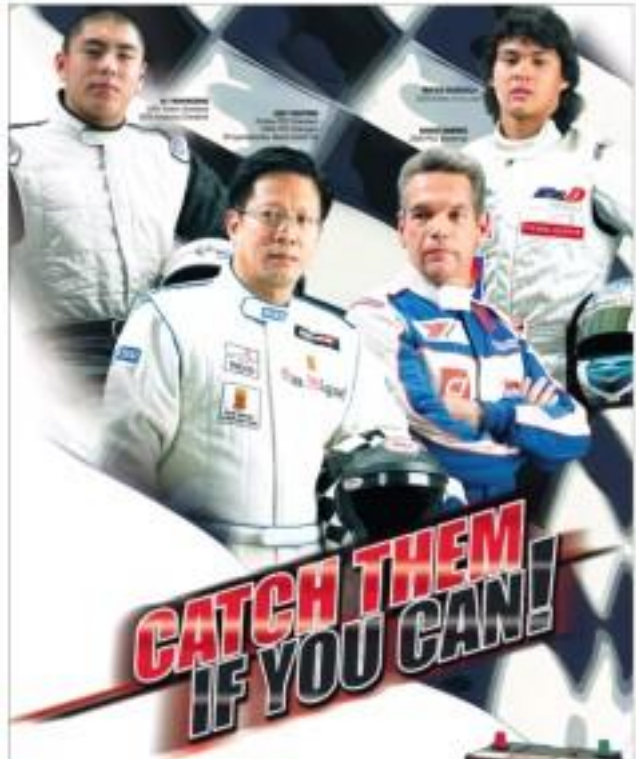
NL names Howard MVP

NEW YORK—RYAN Howard, who led Major League baseball by smashing 58 home runs this season, was voted the 2006 National League Player of the Year Monday, the Philadelphia first baseman HOWARD

since Schmidt in 1986.

Howard received 20 first-place votes and 366 total points in voting by a media panel to defeat St. Louis first baseman Albert Pujols by 41 points with Houston's Lance Berkman third and Carlos Beltran of the New York Mets fourth.

Howard came up just short in trying to lift the Phillies into the playoffs. Howard earlier captured the Hank Aaron Award given to the league's top offensive standout. AFP



MS-AMERICAN IMPORTS: Denise Dy started Regina Morsod, 6-4, 6-0, yesterday to lead the first round winners in the ladies' singles of the 25th Philippine Columbian Association Open Tennis Championships at the PCA indoor shell complex.

Dy, born and raised in San Jose, California, is optimistic of winning the title with the absence of IIF women's teammate Cherrie Mae Arevalo, who skipped the P800,000 tournament in favor of the Hopman Cup which starts tomorrow in Perth, Australia.

"Without Cherrie, I should be dominating this tournament," said the 17-year-old Dy who trained in Europe for three months early this year. "I know that everybody has high expectations for me."

Dy, who together with Arevalo will compete in next month's Indian Asian Games, will next meet Rosita Malabanan, who trailed past Arlene Blanco, 6-1, 6-0, 6-3, in P1,000, today.

In other results, second seed Rochi Zobel blasted Kasie Guillermo, 6-0, 6-0, to advance against Maricris Rivera, 6-1, 6-1 winners over Lourdes Bueno, while No. 3 Michelle Pang defeated qualifier Carla Ferrer, 6-0, 6-3, to advance against Michelle Rush, who prevailed over Sara Isabel Soriano, 6-0, 6-0.

Fourth seed Aya Miyashita beat Shirley Valles 6-2, 6-4, No. 5 Trudy Amoranto bested Marine Abrigo, 6-4, 6-1, No. 6 Aileen Rojas blasted Jocelyn Magpayo, 6-0, 6-0, No. 7 Rica Zobel downed Isabel Figueroa, 6-2, 6-1, and No. 8 Nissa Bosch beat Sea Fabregas, 6-1, 6-2.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Mariano

Philtrust buying 58.26% of PBCom for ₱3B

Snag seen as deal left Luy family out

By Doris C. Dumlao

A HOSTILE TAKEOVER ATTEMPT ON MEDIUM-SIZED PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications looms after Chinese-Filipino tycoon Emilio Yap's Philtrust Bank signed a P3-billion deal to acquire the 58.26-percent stake of the Nubla and Chung families in Philippine Bank of Communications.

But the agreement left out the Luy family, which holds the single biggest voting block of 37 percent in PBCom.

Philtrust corporate secretary Martin Isidro yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange (Inc) the bank's board of directors had accepted an offer from the Nublas and Chungs/families to sell their 186.50 million shares in PBCom.

The offer was estimated by analysts at P30 a share, much lower than PBCom's last traded price of P66. The Nublas own 28 percent of PBCom, and the Chungs, 26 percent.

Isidro said the block sale would be consummated immediately upon approval by Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. and other government agencies.

When the sale covered PBCom's initial ₱7.6-billion financial package to PBCom in 2004, the shareholders were obliged to divest shares control of the bank, or at least 57 percent, in favor of a new investor within five years.

PBCom was even required to give PDIC a special power of attorney to enforce the sale if the bank's shareholders would not be able to do so within the prescribed period.

In an interview with the business newsday Manila Lap, one of the four board representatives of the Luy family in PBCom, said any agreement to buy into the bank was "premature" at this point because the state-owned PDIC would enforce its approval to the deal.

Lay added that his family got a letter from Philtrust only Monday night and had not discussed the matter even among family members. He said the reported deal between Philtrust and other shareholders of PBCom came as a surprise to them.

He also stated that the PDIC's requirement was for the shareholders of PBCom to submit

PHILTRUST A2

Ayala, 2 others submit bids for Maynilad

By Christine A. Saplacan

THREE OF THE FOUR DEBT-ed private bidders vying for the government's 83.5-percent stake in Maynilad Water Services Inc. submitted their final bids yesterday.

Remaining steadfast in the race for control of Manila's west service area were the Ayala group's Manila Water Co. Inc. and MPI Capital Corp., the DMCI Holdings Inc.-led Metro Pacific Investment Corp.'s consortium, and the Hydro consortium of Hydro Property Corp., ABF Holdings Corp. of the Pacon family, the Singapore-based financing firm Pacific Holdings and Malaysian water firm YTL International.

The Indian consortium led by Infrastructure Leasing and Finance Corp. failed to submit its financial and technical bids without prior notice given to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), according to special bids committee vice chair Justice Agnes Devonadera of the Office of the Governmental Corporate Counsel (OGCC).

Qualified bidders are required to have a P6-billion cap, declaration and a standby letter of credit worth another P6 billion during the bidding before they could file their final technical and financial bids, according to financial advisor ABN Amro representative Antoine Gramges.

Gramges noted that this was aside from a minimum bid of $57 million to be placed by the bidders.

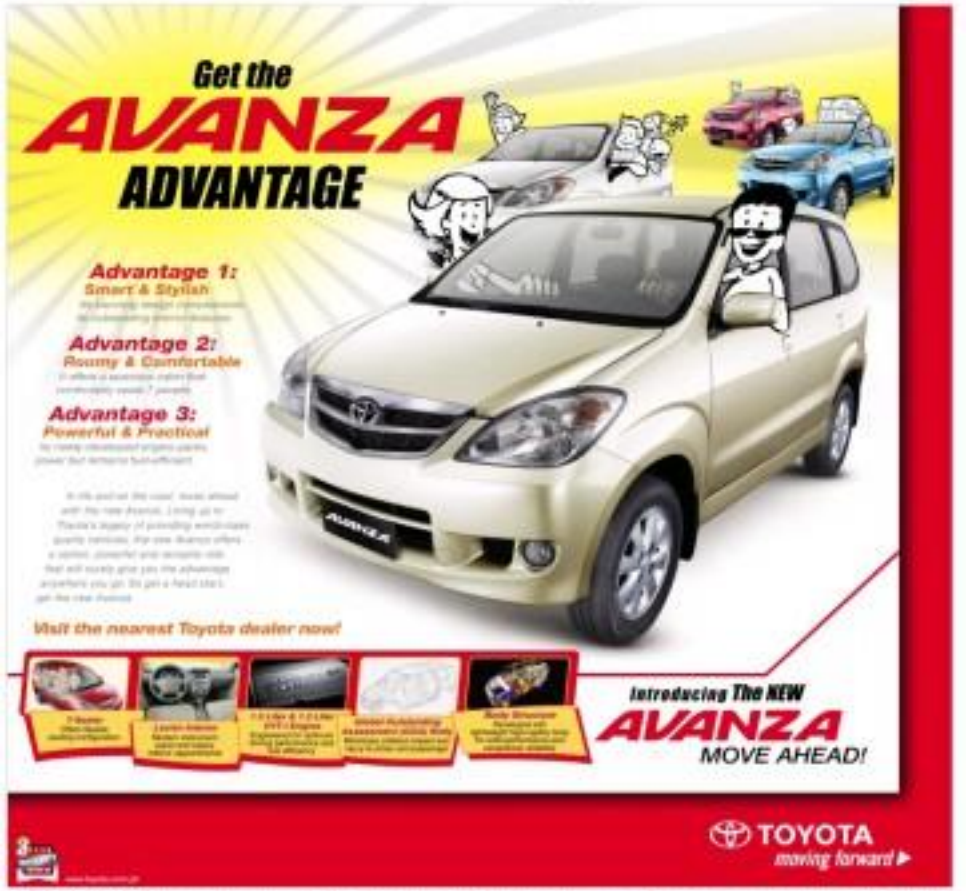
On Dec. 7, the Special Bids and Awards Committee will announce the technical bid

AYALA B3

IN THIS ISSUE

Emilio Yap outdraws Lucio Tan /B3

PAL yields $3-M income in Q3/B6



Luring foreign investments still key to growth

By Dark C. Dumlao

EMPHASIZING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS is still the way to go to push up economic growth and ensure that the country's recent period of resurgence and dynamism would not fizzle out, Ayala Corp. Chair and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II said yesterday.

Gov't must pursue power sector reform, infra dev't

In a speech before the 44th annual meeting of the Philippine Economic Society, the chief of one of the country's biggest and most diversified conglomerates said the Philippines should be reminded that bonds titles have value and gone before but the larger challenge [here] would be to sustain domestic growth rates to create more value for the people.

"We experienced a similar recipe of optimism, in the early years of a democratic, when economic growth initially spurted. We saw this in the first flush of the Edsa revolution when our economic fortunes were dramatically revived," Zobel said.

"And we also felt the tide rising during the Ramos presidency when FVR revived the mantra of Philippines 2000. We each time, those reversing turning points for the economy proved to be vulnerable to external and internal shocks," he added.

Zobel said there was a need to find a way to grow per capita incomes at a faster and more fundamental rate to prevent the country from falling further behind its peers.

"I believe that what is critical at this stage—given that there have already been significant strides made in macro areas and confidence has already been building up—is to get some quick and visible wins which will keep our momentum going," he said.

"We need to signal to foreign investors that we are open for business, that we are serious about reform, and that we are sincere and execute a business friendly environment which will continue to attract and retain long term capital."

Even as there is the private sector doing all that they could to grow their enterprises and re-invest in the country, Zobel said there was a need for a "very strong push" to attract a bigger share of foreign direct investments (FDIs).

He said the government already received significant credit for the extent of fiscal reforms that it had accomplished, especially with the expanded value-added tax where implementation strengthened revenue generation, reduced the projected budget deficit and raised confidence among institutional investors and the credit rating agencies.

But he said there were yet more things that the government could do to continue building on this momentum.

"The first is to implement the power sector reforms successfully. Successful power sector reform would yield huge public benefits. It would reduce the deficit further, and cheaper and better quality power can help entrepreneurs and manufacturing sector, especially in globally competitive areas like electronics. It can also increase disposable household income, which in turn boosts consumer spending and the retail sector," Zobel said.

He also stressed the need to shore up vital sector of infrastructure in the country.

"The quality of infrastructure is often cited as one of the main reasons why we keep dipping in the various global competitiveness rankings. Even if it is resource-constrained, the government and will provide an attractive public-private partnership model to enable much-needed investments to flow into infrastructure building," he said.

Citing the Ayala group's experience with Manila Water and Globe Telecom, Zobel said the success of these enterprises were partly due to the workable regulatory framework put in place to ensure that the welfare of government, private investments, customers and the rest of the stakeholders were all carefully monitored and balanced.

"The complementarities of FDI for developing country economies are well documented and have resulted in positive externalities beyond the economic dimensions," Zobel said, noting that neighboring countries like China, India, Thailand, and now Vietnam, had all grown into Asian tigers on the heels of FDIs.

He added that the Philippines must also pay attention when the Global Business Policy Council's FDI Confidence Index said that "governmental regulation and legal decisions" was the single most highly cited risk to a firm's operations."

"Judicial intervention in disputed matters is certainly a right granted by the Constitution, but the activity must not be abused and cases need to be resolved with utmost urgency," Zobel said.

ZOBEL

Emilio Yap outdraws Lucio Tan

MANILA HOTEL owner Emilio Yap reportedly has outbid his erstwhile partner when his conservative Philtrust Bank announced that it had resolved an agreement with the Chengs and the Nubla to acquire their combined 18 percent block in Philippine Bank of Communications for slightly more than P3 billion, or P58 per share.

The offer clearly ended tycoon Lucio Tan who, in addition to controlling a multibillion peso lifeline when PBCom ran into trouble a few years ago, submitted a slightly-over-P58/per share bid.

Strangely, the newly-crowned stock owner closed higher yesterday at P66, from P58, when it last traded Friday on paper-thin volume.

According to the grapevine, the Lay family which owns about a third of the bank and which happens to be related by affinity to Yap, received the Philtrust notice only late Monday afternoon.

Philtrust and the Cheng-Nubla group apparently signed a "letter-offer" on Thursday, Nov. 16.

The planned Philtrust acquisition will still have to obtain regulatory clearances, considering that the bank is still under rehabilitation by Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

The PBCom board scheduled an emergency board meeting late yesterday afternoon to declare the Philtrust offer.

According to the grapevine, the much bigger PBCom would, should the acquisition push through, eventually be merged with Philtrust, with the latter as the surviving entity.

Architectural turnabout

SUSANNE Chiaro architect Gilbert Yu is set to finally return to Manila, perhaps as early as this weekend, after being detained in China over two botched condominium projects in his native homeland.

According to the grapevine, Yu sought a meeting this weekend with agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, who was in Xiamen over the weekend, to thank him for quickly intervening with Chinese authorities to release Yu from detention and allow the top architect to settle whatever outstanding tax liabilities his Chinese projects may have incurred.

Yu was apparently picked up from his Shanghai hotel late last month while he and his family were on a cruise from Shanghai, he was brought to Xiamen, his ancestral province, where he was detained.

Luckily, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was also visiting China at that time, heard the story and put in a good word for Yu, who happened to be an old friend of his wife Imelda Marcos.

Yu reportedly set up a group of Filipino-Chinese investors during the go-go mid-'90s to build two condominiums in their ancestral province, but the projects were affected by the regional currency crisis, cost overruns, and, in the case of the first project, local-level graft.

According to the grapevine, the first project had 12 investors, including Jimmy Tang of Setaco, who was technically correct when he disputed a Cockfax item claiming that he was involved in Yu's Pacific Plaza project in Xiamen.

The second condo, the Pacific Plaza, had a different and bigger set of 42 investors, including Robert Tenerife of the Phinma Group.

Heard through the grapevine

DINDO Jardeleza of Toronto Sr., the famed Manila Bulletin columnist was honored as vice chair of Equitable PCIBank ownership, which also happened to be Bernardino's birthday.

Earlier, Equitable PCIBank chair and SIS president Cesareo dela Paz delayed her trip to India so she could attend her father's 60th anniversary of the Cornell alumni association in the Philippines and Bernardino's advanced birthday celebrations over at Makati Shangri-La's Red.

Bernardino's happens to be the current president of the alumni association and Dela Paz, the immediate past president.

Email: cashiers@cockfax.biz

Philtrust . . .

no less than 67 percent to a new investor, which meant that the Lucio voting block was necessary to effect a deal as the combined shares of the two other families would not be enough to comply with the requirement.

"We should not be in a hurry because we are still consolidating other interested parties," Lay said, referring to the two-year deadline set by PDIC.

PDIC executive vice president Cristina Gonzales yesterday said the government agency and the Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas would withdraw to a majority proposal only if the parties would still have to comply with certain shareholdings requirements.

She also noted that the agreement among the interested parties must be still approved by the monetary board.

Should Philtrust succeed in taking over PBCom, a merger between the two medium-sized banks would create the country's 11th biggest bank with total assets of P171.4 billion, PBCom is ranked 19th with total assets of P68.2 billion and Philtrust, 20th with P63.7 billion.

Philtrust will also have to shell out more than 10 billion since it will have to make a tender offer to other shareholders of publicly listed PBCom to comply with PSE rules.

Ayala, 2 others . . .

From page B1

resolutions. Only bidders who will pass this technical evaluation will be allowed to give its financial bid on Dec. 8.

Bernardino noted that though no-entity shareholder Cadres Valuers Inc. (now Bienworth Bum Lyonnaise dev Bank) has not fully committed to sell its 16 percent, this would not be a big obstacle to the proceedings.

Under the terms of reference up-

proved by the board of directors of Maynilad, the winning bidder will take over and construct operations of the west zone for the remaining years of the 25-year concession. The winning bidder will also have to assume Maynilad's obligations under a "take and capital

restructuring agreement" with MWSS.

The Lopez group originally won the bidding for the west zone concession in 1997. But after almost six years of operations, it filed for court rehabilitation due to mounting unsettled foreign loans, which were assumed by the MWSS.

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Rice reserve scheme OKd

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE ASSOCIATION of South East Asian Nations, plus China, Japan and South Korea or the Asean + 3 has approved the extension of the emergency rice reserve program until 2008, a government official said.

The Asean agriculture and forestry ministers and the ministers of Japan, China and South Korea endorsed the possibility of continuing the pilot project into a permanent scheme during their sixth meeting in Singapore last week, Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano said in an interview.

"The Ministers also noted the achievements made so far with the rice reserve program," Serrano said.

The Asean + 3 could increase the reserve to 500,000 metric tons this year.

The rice reserve program is intended to ensure rice supply in the region during calamities.

Asean comprises Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

LCD TV sales growing

By Rizz T. Dichoso

The LCD TV market is expected to be on strong this coming December that appliance stores could sell 1,800 to 1,900 units — even if P130,000 each, according to officials from Sony Corp. in the Philippines and local partner Avid Sales Corp.

"We recorded 10-percent year-on-year growth at the end of our fiscal year last September and we expect to report double-digit growth again this fiscal year with LED sales expected to contribute much revenue," said Sony Philippines president and CEO Hiroshi Kobayashi.

Avid, one of Sony's local partners, has also anticipated the demand surge in LCD TVs and plans to cash in on the boom with the opening of two more Sony-centric shops, called Sony Square, on top of its current four, said Avid operations manager Christine Hinerwin D.G. Chan.

"There is a boom in LCD TV sales because it is a new product, and Sony in particular drove in growing demand because it is a trend opener in this segment," Chan said.

Sony officials said in an interview that Sony has a 40-percent share of the market for 32-40-inch LCD TVs.

The increasing demand has resulted in the opening of Sony stores nationwide.

PAL yields $3-M income in Q3

Reverses $4.5-M loss in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Rau T. Chikasabe

FLAG CARRIER PHILIPPINE AIRlines (PAL) of tycoon Lucio Tan posted net income of $3.01 million during the third quarter, a turnaround from its net loss of $4.5 million in the same quarter last year, according to its report to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

This brought PAL's net profit for the period April to September to $35.39 million, up 12 percent, for six-to-end a statement.

PAL attributed the higher profit to an increase in revenues, inclusive from passengers, freight, cargo income and other sources.

Revenues for the quarter totaled $512.1 million, 8.9 percent more than last year's same quarter figure of $286.3 million.

Passenger revenue reached $340.4 million during the quarter, accounting for the bulk of PAL's total revenues, compared with $230.4 million in the same period last year.

Cargo revenues also increased to $50.95 million from $37.98 million in the same period last year.

Interest income surged to $7.8 million during the July - September quarter from $547,000 in the same period last year.

The July-September period is PAL's second quarter of operations as its fiscal year starts in April.

A PAL official said the airline's major revenue drivers were its US and Other/Asian markets.

"In terms of revenue, the US market is the biggest. Historically, in terms of volume and sales, United States and North Asia, including Japan and South Korea, have always been good markets for us," the official said.

Total expenses, meanwhile, rose 6.2 percent to $509 million during the quarter from the previous year's quarter of $191 million.

The area however offset by lower maintenance expenses.

Expenses from flying operations rose 16.4 percent to $149.3 million during the quarter from $128.3 million in the same period last year, due to rising fuel cost and depreciation expenses for flight equipment.

Fuel costs swelled 21.4 percent over last year's quarter total of $86.2 million.

This was due to the rise in average fuel price per barrel of aviation fuel for $65.21 during the quarter from $65.78 in the same quarter last year.

GUAMAN AWARD

Guam Governor Felix P Camacho honored SM Group Founder Henry Sy Sr. with the Governor's Guahan Award in ceremonies coinciding with the blessing of the SM Store in the Agana Shopping Center here. The Governor's Guahan Award he was established in 2004 to recognize models of service to the people of Guam.

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Uniwide trims losses

WAREHOUSE OPERATOR UNIwide Holdings Inc. said it ran to net loss in the first nine months to P97 million from P429.3 million in last year after it paid for some of its debt using property assets, the company said in its financial report to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

It has already settled P4.3 billion in debt out of P7.5 billion it owes secured creditors as of June 30 this year, leaving Uniwide with just P3.2 billion.

Uniwide registered consolidated revenues of P9.61 million during the nine-month period ending Sept. 30, a 9.1 percent dip from P11.12 million in the same period last year.

The decline was attributed to the drop in consolidated retail revenues and franchise fees.

Operating expenses fell to P12.3 million from P830.6 million due to cash savings and cost cutting measures.

Uniwide Holdings is the publicly-listed central franchisor of warehouse clubs and department stores under the Uniwide Sales trade name.

In a related development, the rehabilitation receiver of the Uniwide Group of Companies is asking the embattled warehouse group to study options including a possible debt for asset swap to help reduce the company's more than P15 billion debt to unsecured creditors.

The Uniwide group owes another P2.3 billion in debt to roughly 1,200 suppliers, including trade suppliers, consumers, private lenders and coastal mall tenants.

ATI income up 19.2%

PORT DEVELOPER AND OPERator Asian Terminals Inc. (ATI) recorded a 19.2 percent increase in net income as of September this year.

Revenue growth, combined with cost saving measures resulted in the increase in net income to P1.06 billion from P889.2 million last year.

ATI's consolidated revenue for the first nine months grew to P3.3 billion from P3.02 billion in the same period in 2004.

The growth in consolidated revenue was driven by a 9.3 percent increase in ATI's port business.

In the meantime, additions to ATI's property and equipment for the first three quarters of 2006 amounted to P135.3 million, mainly for port facilities improvement and equipment related acquisitions.

"ATI's consistent focus on operational and service excellence was key to attaining a solid performance for the first nine months of the year," said Jeremy J. L. Rideout, ATI president and chief executive officer. "We expect the moderate growth to be sustained until the end of 2006."

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DISCLOSURES

MELISSA S. Maniaway has been appointed director of **Pinoy Recoveries Inc.**, replacing Oscar T. Reyes as representative of Land Bank of the Philippines in the Pinoy board.

***

ELIAS U. Yap, Juan Po Seng, Ronald P. Sugarong, Jesus Clet G. Nonoy, Daisy L. Parker and Rolf T. Lopez have been elected director of **Omni Holdings Inc.** Arturo Tan has been elected independent director.

***

SCALIWAG Holdings Inc. has disclosed the payment on Jan. 11 of P0.009 cash dividend per share to all stockholders of record as of Dec. 8.

***

EMPIRE East Land Holdings Inc. has disclosed the buy-back of 2.6 million shares at P0.24 each or Rep. 20. **Compiled by Kalo Pastrano. Inquirer Research**

Shares ...

From page B1

The composite index fell 77.86 points to 2,025.41 after moving between 2,030.06 and 2,043.33. The broader all-share index fell 7.01 points to 1,755.13.

Losers beat gainers 74 to 36, with 32 unchanged. Turnover was 6.09 billion shares worth P116.16 billion.

"The market is consolidating within 2,000-2,050," said Rommel Marcaspal of Westlink Global Equities.

"The base-building is welcome given the expected opportunity for investors to re-accumulate.

"If the market doesn't fall below the 2,000-point level, the uptrend should continue given its overall outlook for the Philippine economy," he added. AFP

Net borrowings down 50.6% in first 10 months of 2006

Gov't borrowed less, paid more debts as fiscal position improved

By Michelle V. Reyes

THE GOVERNMENT'S NET BORROWINGS was slashed by half in the first 10 months of the year as fiscal position improved notably in the country's improving fiscal position.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that net borrowings in January to October this year reached only P116.46 billion, down 50.6 percent from last year's P235.56 billion. For October, alone, the figure was P12.66 billion.

Net borrowings is the amount borrowed less the amount of maturing obligations paid.

According to DOF records, the government borrowed a total of P122.67 billion during the first 10 months. The amount of budget rate paid during the period reached P406.2 billion, or 7 percent higher than the 379.14 billion set under the government's fiscal program.

The increase in revenue collection in the past months allowed the government to pay more debt than programmed.

DOF target net borrowings during the 10-month period, P151.506 billion came from foreign creditors and government securities investors, while P346.95 billion were incurred from domestic sources.

To minimize the country's exposure to foreign exchange risks, the government has favored domestic borrowings over foreign debts.

Finance officials said the government's improving fiscal position eased the pressure to borrow and paved the way for the allocation of more funds for interest payments this year.

The DOF earlier said the national government's budget deficit in the first 10 months of the year amounted to P56.3 billion, which was only 45 percent of the P125-billion deficit ceiling set for 2006.

For the whole year, the government is expecting the budget deficit to be way below the ceiling.

The government's ability to stay on track of its fiscal targets for the year is attributed partly to the higher-than-programmed tax and duty collection of the Bureau of Customs. Non-tax revenues—particularly dividends remitted by state-owned firms and proceeds from privatization, are also increasing.

Restraint on spending in view of Congress' failure to pass the proposed P1.063-trillion budget also contributed to the declining deficit, although officials said this might suppress economic growth.

The government is operating on a restricted 2005 budget of about P902 billion. Congress, however, recently passed a supplemental budget worth P46.9 billion to compensate for the loss or than intended budget for the year.

'TULONG BAHYA PARA SA ESKWELA' DMB Network chair and CEO Felipe Quine (right) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. (left) drop their donations for the "Tulong Bahya para sa Eskwela" project as child actor BJ "Yaki" Forbes (center) looks on. DMB Network is now a partner of the BSP and the Department of Education in the nationwide fund drive that will benefit public elementary schools.

PNOC seeking additional Dutch funding

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. is considering seeking additional funding from the Dutch government for the expansion of its solar home systems project to selected remote barangays in the country.

In an interview, PNOC officer in charge Pedro Aquino Jr. said one of the priorities was to accelerate the government's rural electrification efforts, and one way to do so was to reach more unserved barangays via the solar home system project.

This time, however, instead of distributing solar panels to individual homes, he said more communities could be energized by setting up photovoltaic plants in selected locations.

"We plan to seek the Dutch government support for this," he said.

PNOC's Solar Home System Dissemination Project, which the state firm aims to complete by mid-2007, is a joint undertaking of PNOC, the Department of Energy and Shell Solar Philippines Corp.

It involves the sale and distribution of 15,300 solar home systems to various areas around the country within five years.

The units covered include parts of the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Mindanao, particularly Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Davao, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga del Sur.

Providing financial support for the project is the Netherlands government through a 5.550 million-euro (around P370.6-million) grant representing 90 percent of the total equipment cost.

As of October, the project had already benefited 38,729 households in various regions in the country, data from PNOC stated.

In early October, PNOC received funding from Middle East Petroleum Services for the installation of solar home systems in selected barangays in the Visayas province.

The "Haw sa Hagos" project aims to initially energize 60 households in Hagos.

MIAA, PAL settle dispute over ₱2.9B in fees

By Rica T. Gichonda

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Authority and Philippine Airlines have reached an out-of-court settlement to end a civil case against the airline over unpaid airport concessions.

The case was first filed with the Pasay Regional Trial Court and was later elevated to the Court of Appeals, where it was pending at the time of the agreement.

MIAA unpaid fees had ballooned to P3.09 billion as of early 2006 due to the rules adjustment and interest charges that had accumulated since 2005. The two parties, however, have agreed on much to the original amount sought by MIAA.

Under the deal, PAL committed to pay MIAA some P1.91 billion in concessional fees from Dec. 1, 1995 until March 31, 2006 in installments of P34.9 million a month for seven years.

The agreement will become effective upon the final approval of the Court of Appeals.

MIAA general manager Alfonso Cusi called this development "a milestone" in the airport manager's history.

PAL had long disputed the MIAAs collection of concessional fees, but said that under PAL was named flag carrier under Presidential Decree No. 1590, it became exempt from paying such fees.

The MIAA, for its part, had insisted that concessional fees were not covered by the said decree.

After a long-drawn legal battle, PAL signed a compromise agreement with MIAA on Nov. 14.

"The payment to be made by PAL to MIAA will help us pursue our modernization," Cusi said. "There's a lot of work to do and this development will help us accomplish this mark."

MIAA supervises the operation of all air airport authorities in the country as stated in Executive Order No. 341.

IT firms' budgets for innovation shrinking, says HP

INNOVATION HAS BECOME THE BUZZWORD for enterprises worldwide but in reality the IT environment has become so expensive to manage and maintain that only 9 percent is left for innovation, according to Hewlett-Packard Philippines.

Nilo S. Cruz, managing director of HP Philippines, said in an interview at the sidelines of the HP Synergy media forum that companies were spending as much as 71 percent of their budgets for maintenance and operations. Furthermore, infrastructures take up 23 percent and only 9 percent is left for developing or adopting innovative technologies.

"Companies are always asking for discounts," Cruz quipped. "But seriously, the rising volume of data and the fast rate of system changes are making up so much time and money," Cruz said.

Time and money go to making systems to meet changing compliance demands from industry regulators, covering infrastructures left to viruses, learning data needs to keep customer records and tailor marketing strategies according to customers' profiles, and keeping up with the growing number of applications.

Those are the problems of conflicting demands which is partly due to increasing workplace mobility said Gilad Israeli, market leading director for Southeast Asia of Intel Macroeconomics, in a separate interview.

"Before, companies only had to manage their resources in one place, the office. Now, more and more, their users and resources are workforce home or in the beach," Israeli said.

"I am personally happy to be mobile, and Intel is happy to be making life easier for the end user, the one typing at the laptop. However, the side results in many complex challenges to the IT manager to keep operations running smoothly, maintain connectivity and make sure that tech support is available to the end user wherever a virus or other problem comes up."

In a result, information in IT managers are now being asked to innovate and improve business process, while keeping costs down, said Ricardo Sarmiento, country manager of Intel Microelectronics Philippines.

Officials said HP and Intel were helping them in these areas by establishing an adaptive infrastructure using the HP Integrity server powered by Intel's Itanium 2 Dual-Core CPU processors.

Intel Southeast Asia director Philip Cronin said Intel had a wide range of processors that cater to the different needs of clients. Its Xeon 5000 series, for instance, serves the needs of large firms, while the Xeon 7000 is suitable for back-up and medium enterprises.

"It's HP with Intel inside," Cruz said. Rica T. Gichonda

E-mail at_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar G. Hangosang

MOTORING

Toyota strengthens market grip with new Avanza

By Charles E. Bohol

THE ARRIVAL OF THE Toyota Avanza in the country could not have come at a better time. The market is now hungry for a small utility vehicle at a reasonable price and the fact that fuel prices have just gone up, a vehicle that goes easy on fuel will surely appeal strongly.

For the Philippines as well as in most markets around the world, the Avanza—a compact multipurpose vehicle—is an entirely new model lineup considering that it is not adapted from an existing model anywhere in the world.

THE AVANZA offers a unique and more affordable package, thanks to its spacious cabin (for both passengers and cargo).

"The Avanza was developed specifically for this region. First introduced in Indonesia, followed by Malaysia, Thailand, Mexico and with further plans to expand to the other regions in the Middle East and Africa. We look forward at selling at around 800 to 900 units a month for the first six to seven months," said Danny Isla, vice president for marketing of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.

Since its introduction in January 2004, the Avanza (taken from an Italian word, Avanzare, which means advance) has sold more than 200,000 units in Asia alone.

Breaking the rules

Just like in most countries it was introduced, the Avanza breaks the rules in terms of pricing as it will sell for as low as P582,000 for the 1.3-liter, manual transmission variant with the more expensive variants going at P738,000 (for the 1.5-liter, manual transmission) and P773,000 (for the 1.5-liter, automatic transmission).

"Toyota wants to step in the forefront of today's automotive market demands. With this price, TMPC hopefully puts forward the Avanza as an entry-level crossover vehicle for both commercial market (like taxis) and small business enterprises," Isla said.

At a glance, the Avanza is smaller version of the Innova. It's shorter than most sedans but with its 2,655 mmm wheelbase, the Avanza creates spacious cabin that enables seven passengers to sit comfortably in any of its three rows.

Moreover, a number of flexible seating/load configurations are possible, thanks to the vehicle's 826 liters of load space available (VDA method) with all the rear seats folded away.

GOA-certified

Talking of rigidity and safety, the Avanza body is Global Outstanding Assurance-certified, which means it qualifies Toyota's crash tests, a must for every new model.

The GOA crash tests are comparable to the toughest international standards and even exceed them in some areas like in front-end collisions.

Combined with features with driver SRS airbag (for the G-grade), collapsible steering column and standard 7-point ELR seatbelts for all rear seats, the Avanza makes cars only compact vehicles.

THE AVANZA was initially developed specifically for the Asian region, taking into consideration the economic levels of the market in these countries.

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The 2007 Honda Pilot

MY DRIFT

Andre Pabua

"WHOA, THIS IS A SUV, CAR," I HOPE saying to myself, a statement that is made relative to the Honda marque and value any usually be expected from cars that bear the capital H logo up front. Anyone's first 15 seconds perusing the physical mass of the brand's brand-bonny SUV offering will probably be straddled with statements of surprise with regard to the mass and heft of the Pilot. Someone described this vehicle as a CRV on steroids and I beg to differ. It feels more like it's been to camp-out and it really, really liked the food.

Space is the first where and an issue for the Pilot. The pine stores are very much welcome in several parts of the cabin such only the last row exploiting any sort of exertion be ingress and egress. The ability to individually fold down seating, much like the RTT seats found on the Jazz and mini-hauler a really massive cargo capacity. Just how big? I said once that I transported a live 7 foot Christmas tree in a Jazz. The Pilot seems like it will take a couple of llamas's elves, a small woodchop and maybe a single reindeer. I just, in all honesty, bet you get my point.

Burly and brash

The SUV's interior details are also quite eye opening. I am used to the very Japanese renovation of Honda interiors, sensibly sprinkled with interesting plastic surfaces and subtle control-knob ornamentation. The Pilot, on the other hand, screams plush rat load, with the dainty buttons and stalks replaced by chunky, Tonka truck-like appurtenances. The clever and quaint bin given way to what is burly and brash.

The engine is all to rather a step in another direction from the 3.5-liter V6 is able to deliver a decent number of ponies in the crush, 244 horses in fact. The surprising torque trumps the horsepower numbers though, with 325 lbs-ft of twist coming in at just 4,300 rpm. The two-ton curb weight is also natural but the engine is more than enough to take it from standing and up to speed in a decent fashion.

Suspension and handling are straight out of satisfying the decent mom school of thought. Stress spots will have cost. On window and expect a smooth, comfort oriented ride. Some of the drivability is compromised but the Pilot never feels completely vague. Weight transfer during braking, steering and acceleration is decent, marking the 18.9 handle more like a tart noodle rather than a body one.

Braking is as expected from a car that is made to be driven by a large section of the population, in that not too much feedback. Initial brake pedal travel is long with a positive engagement at the end of the stroke, near the floor pan. I guess this is an owner pause don't go bobbing about, swaying back and forth when the driver steps on the brakes. Again, comfort is very much in the mind of the manufacturers here.

Safety ensured

Safety is ensured by the usual ABS, EBD and VSA acronyms associated with Honda products but there also do not help a vehicle get one of the highest 5-Star OSA ratings for a mid-size SUV. The Pilot's six airbags come complete with passenger position sensors that help intelligently manage deployment during emergencies.

The difference in style, size and spirit of the Honda Pilot is very much due to a single factor. This is a product of Honda America, built and designed specifically for that market and the first of its kind to be sold in the Philippines.

One has to take a look at the pedigree of this executive market special: it's model to better understand why it is a Honda (that breaks the mold of what the Philippine market is comfortable and accustomed to). Initially breaking over to 2004, the mid-sized Pilot has proven to be a commercial success in the States.

Mild model update

Already having undergone a mild model update, almost 180,000 units have been sold in the years it's been available to the public. Sharing some of the platform basics with the Ridgeline pickup, another US specific model, these two vehicles can be seen as the Japanese incorporation of the surrogate superwoman and savior of the picky American buyer.

With the 2007 Honda Pilot, the Philippine consumer gets a vehicle that competes well in one of the most resilient SUV markets in the world. How whether the Filipino buyer wants a product that is primarily American but made by a Japanese manufacturer is a different matter altogether. If the goods cabinet and affordable don't tickle your fancy, please look elsewhere.

HONDA Pilot

Global trend toward small, low-cost cars

BOXY LUXURY SUVs and high-performance cars like the Kia Picanto and Chevrolet Spark. They are at the forefront of the global trend toward small, low-cost, emerging market cars as developing economies of the world "motorize."

For years, auto sales were characterized by slow growth, especially in the mature North American and Western European markets. But now the auto industry is forecasting a sharp leap in global sales from 65 million vehicles in 2005 to 75 million in 2010—a five-year growth rate of 12 percent.

The surge is projected mainly in the so-called BRIC nations—Brazil, Russia, India and China—as rising income levels allow hundreds of thousands of consumers to move directly past their second bicycles to their first cars. For many buyers, cars offered only low-cost entry-level cars.

ON THE ROAD

Ankit Seville-Mendoza

First vehicle

J.D. Power & Associates recently discovered that in China, 80 percent of car buyers are purchasing their first vehicle, compared with fewer than 20 percent in the United States, Europe and Japan. China is on course to pass Japan as the second largest motor vehicle market in the world after the United States with sales expected to reach 6.8 million cars and light trucks this year.

China's economic boom has attracted more car makers than the United States or companies like Fiat, Volkswagen and PSA Peugeot Citroen compete for market share with General Motors, Ford, DaimlerChrysler, Toyota, Honda and Nissan in joint ventures with Chinese companies.

Most dressed in the fast-growing Chinese market is shifting increasingly toward subcompacts and even smaller cars, with Chinese companies emerging as joint venturers with Chinese firms are scrambling to fill the demand.

Self-competition

The established brands have a big competition from Chinese automakers that offer subcompacts at $6,000 and have consequently published a number of the domestic market. After learning how to control costs through inexpensive labor in every stage of the production process and through the use of inducements or copying of Western and Japanese designs, Chinese automakers have increased their output and overall prices.

The ability of Chinese car manufacturers to produce low-cost cars not only for the domestic market but also has inspired Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Russia could pose a challenge to established auto giants looking to conquer emerging markets as the BRIC countries. GM Worldwide, a Michigan-based research firm that specializes in the auto industry, predicts that companies that dominate the auto market in the BRIC countries will soon use as weapons to rise global auto sector.

As growth in other markets such as the United States and Western Europe slows down, the race is on among Western and Japanese carmakers to come up with an inexpensive but reliable family car with a price tag of US$7,000 or less for the BRIC markets.

Benchmark

The current "benchmark" is the Tata Logan, launched in 2004 by France's Renault S.A. with a $7,000 price tag. The Logan has become a surprise hit in emerging markets such as Romania, Morocco and Russia and Renault recently announced a joint venture in China to produce it there.

Honda Motor Co. is considering developing a highly affordable mini-car exclusively for India, according to executives. Anticipating a surge in sales, Honda, Nissan Motor Co. and Suzuki Motor Corp. are expanding their operations in India. GM is increasing output at existing plants in Russia, Ford is building truck on one more factory in China and considering expanding production in India. Toyota is adding a second factory in China while Daimler-Chrysler is working with Chinese automaker Guangzhou Automobile Co. Ltd. about a joint venture to produce compact cars for sale globally under Chrysler's Dodge brand.

New compact

Tenaru Motor Corp., which posted a record net profit of $3.44 billion and is poised to overtake GM as the world's biggest automaker by sales, is developing a low-cost car of its own for the BRIC markets, although Toyota sells in 140 emerging market countries the new Hilux truck and, in contrast, the luxury Land Cruiser SUV built on a single low-cost platform, aims to offend-able small car Corolla, they are not doing enough for many consumers in developing countries.

According to Toyota engineers and executives, the low-cost car destined for the BRIC markets will be "a new family compact" that will be produced in the new plant slated to open in 2009 in India before its production is expanded worldwide. GM says that the new car is likely to be produced in Brazil, China and perhaps Thailand.

We make no this is that it is to be produced in Thailand, it will soon be here. (With reports from The Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune and AP)

BENCHMARK Inexpensive cars like the Renault Logan

INTERIOR of the Renault Logan

MotorScope

Contab puts RP on world road engineering map

THE COUNTRY'S HISTORIC HOSTING OF THE 17TH GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROAD Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia (REAAA) on Nov. 20-24 is placing the Philippines prominently on the world's road engineering map.

The three-pronged event is more than global participation as the REAAA conference, attracting delegates from 18 countries from East Asia, Europe, North America, Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia.

There foreign delegates will have a "good glimpse of the Philippines and the great strides it has made" in road infrastructure technology and development, according to Public Works Undersecretary and REAAA president Salvador Pleyto, the first Filipino to head this prestigious organization since its founding in 1959, 47 years ago.

The conference brings delegates to a meeting from Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, China, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States.

"You will see the five-day event that includes three days of technical sessions from Nov. 22 to 25," Pleyto said.

The technical sessions involve the presentation of 80 technical papers on different technological developments, 16 of which are from the Philippines, according to Engr. Nestor Pilar, Public Works Undersecretary and now Road Engineering Association of the Philippines (REAP) president Jesus Dominguez.

REAAA is co-organizing the conference with REAP, REAAA-Philippines Chapter and the Contab Board of Public Works and Highways (BPWH).

The other possible events of the 12th REAAA General Meeting are the 81st REAAA Governing Council Meeting scheduled on Nov. 21 and the 82nd on Nov. 25, and the 6th Heads of Road Services Meeting (HRSM) meeting on Nov. 23.

The HRSM and governing council meetings will be presided over by Pleyto.

The foreign delegates will also enjoy three holds of various road-related products, services and technologies on stand along the entire span of the PGH's longstanding attractive city center route today.

Jaguar gets top price at Scottish Car of the Year

THE NEW JAGUAR XK COUPE HAS BEEN VOTED OVERALL CAR OF THE YEAR AND SPORTS CAR of the Year at the Scottish Car of the Year Show 2006.

The new XK coupe presented by president of the Association of the Scottish Motoring Industry Stephen Fish who commented:

SAID FISH: "The Association of Scottish Motoring Writers is delighted to award the Scottish Car of the Year Accolade for 2006 to the Jaguar XK Coupe. Despite so many fantastic competitors on the shortlist, the new Jaguar XK coupe was the unanimous choice. Positively impressed from every angle and designed by Scotsman Ian Callum the XK is also thoroughly accomplished on the road for the drivers. The instrument addition of a supercharged 4.2-litre V8 complement this to really appealed 4.2-litre engine, adds further strength to the Jaguar's cause."

The Car of the Year award for the XK was received by Jaguar's UK managing director Geoff Howlett.

"I am especially honored to collect this award for what we believe to be a truly distinctive car. The XK stands out remarkable exposure the United Kingdom when it was launched in March this year, and already more than 2,000 customers in the UK have taken delivery, with Scottish dealers recording a 15 percent growth in XK sales compared to 2005. Scotland continues to be a significant market for us, with more than 1,100 vehicles sold this year while XJ sales have remained very strong with 1,600 cars sold," he said.

The Jaguar Trophy Car of the Year was by the 69 Jaguar was accepted up by Jaguar's Design Director Ian Callum who said: "I feel very proud to have led the team that created the new interesting XK and it is even more special to see its achieved its place in Scotland from the Association of Scottish Motoring Writers. The XK is undoubtedly the most advanced car Jaguar has ever produced and marks the beginning of a remarkable new chapter for the company."

Honda holds seminars for PUV drivers

PROVIDING THE CORNERSTONE OF PROMOTING SAFETY ON THE ROAD IS A PART OF ITS LONG-term corporate responsibility, Honda Cars Makiling provided another round of seminars for public utility vehicle drivers, who consider driving as a profession and source of living.

After its successful conduct in 2005, the all-organized Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) seminars are a little bit part of the Honda's effort to educate public utility vehicle drivers on safety driving. The seminar activities for Isuzu Bay at cars station in Laguna and at the Ayala Alabang Village Association (AAVA) in Ayala Alabang, promoted not only the right direction-making tools to avoid accidents on the road, but also the are several we observed of the participants—through actual driving demonstrations and simulation-based programs.

The CSR-linked off-shift Fabricio Lozada Pagala, chief instructor at Honda Cars Philippines Inc.'s Honda Safety Driving Center, as he visits speaker in defensive driving. Other resource speakers happen to be Isabel Miguel Perez and Bernie Castillo. In addition from Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), who handled "Traffic Rules and Regulations" and the "Entering Operation in Metro Manila".

MMDA's Bernie Castillo explains the rules and regulations in driving.

Honda's 2005 driving expert fellow journey and has driven the opportunity to get together and exchange views. CSR participants appreciated the learning opportunities that Honda provided.

New 'Stars' added to The Peninsula Manila

MERCEDES-BENZ HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE POPULAR CHOICE FOR DISTINGUISHING DISTINguished people around the world because of comfort, reliability and the prestige it exudes. And for this reason, The Peninsula Manila, a five-star luxury hotel in the heart of the business district of Makati, has updated a few more "Stars" to join a fleet of 11 Mercedes-Benz S-Class limousines that were officially received over by Carl Schmitz Inc., the Philippine general distributor of Mercedes-Benz, during a custom reception held in The Peninsula Manila.

In the Southeast Asian region, The Peninsula Manila is the only first hotel to add the new Mercedes-Benz S-Class to its executive fleet.

Peninsula Manila's newest luxury limousine comes equipped with the latest safety technologies that will help travelers have the comfort of mind to enjoy their ride. Why is it one of The Peninsula Manila is proud to announce the addition of the passenger seat and chauffeur driven by staff members from Mercedes-Benz Luxury. The final operation of the hotel.

Mercedes-Benz and The Peninsula Manila share the same specific aims of innovation and customer satisfaction, highest quality and enduring passion to serve and mobility beyond expectations.

Greatest diesel marathon of all times reaches final destination in Beijing

BEIJING—THE LONGEST DIESEL marathon of all times ended successfully in Beijing today. The 36 Mercedes-Benz E-Class cars, which left Paris on Oct. 21, on a mass environmentally sweeping about 14,000 kilometers, arrived safe and sound in the Chinese capital after traversing Europe and Asia.

Through the endurance test under extreme conditions, Mercedes-Benz has once again demonstrated the outstanding performances of its modern diesel engines in terms of robustness, fuel economy and reliability. Proof of this is also the fuel consumption of the victorious "silky" team which won the final economy contest with an average of 7.19 L/100 km diesel. The lowest one on which big won as low as 5.9 L/100 km.

"During this endurance test of a total of more than 500,000 km, the 300 320 CDI and three E 320 Bluetec impressively showed the potential of our high-tech diesels. They proved that driving enjoyment, great fuel economy and environmental compatibility are not mutually exclusive," said Dr. Dieter Zetsche, chair of the board of management of DaimlerChrysler AG responsible for the Mercedes Car Group.

"At the same time, the long distance drive from Paris to Beijing rendered the qualities of the new E-Class generation more tangible. The S-Class has lived up to all the promises that we had previously made to the participants and our customers," he added. The grand finale of the long distance drive took place in Beijing's famous Tiengding Gate, the southern access point to the "Holy land" of the Forbidden City.

During the five legs of the "E-Class Experience" more than 200 drivers from 16 countries took turns at the steering wheels of the diesel sedans. In only 25 driving days they passed through nine countries under partly extreme conditions, such as snow and ice, as well as unpaved roads.

The average daily driving distance was about 560 km. Together with the 24 escort vehicles, which ranged from the G-Classes of the Mercedes-Benz crew and technical trucks to the mobile diesel service station, the marathon entourage covered a total road distance of about 600,000 km. This corresponds to the 21-fold circumference of the earth at the equator.

5 legs from Europe to Asia

After the start in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower on Oct. 21, the route of the "E-Class Experience" initially led through France, Germany, Poland and The Baltics to St. Petersburg, where the first change of drivers took place after seven days. In this case, the route followed in the path of the legendary first transcontinental automobile race held 99 years ago, which led from the opposite direction from Beijing to Paris and more automotive history.

The second group crossed the E-Classes through Russia and over the snow-covered Urals to Srkatenburg, while the third group drove through the Kazakh steppe and Siberia on the steps of Kazakhstan to Almaty. The high point of this leg of about 2,500 km was the overnight stay with Kazakh good families in the small town of Baikonur—organized by the local mayor.

In many places the convoy was spontaneously surrounded and joyfully greeted by local people who appreciated their striking and unusual design. All participating E-Class cars are decorated with the flags of the participating nations to underscore the international flair of the long distance drive, took place in Beijing's famous Tiengding Gate, the southern access point to the "Holy land" of the Forbidden City.

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The diesel marathon crossed from Kazakhstan into its destination country, China, at the last of eight border crossings along the route. The final leg of the group took place in Lanzhou on the Yellow River after crossing the Taklamakan Desert and driving about 1,000 km on the legendary Silk Road. From there the last 1,700 km led to the south of the Gobi desert and through the great steppe of Inner Mongolia. The number of the "E-Class Experience" spent their last night in Badaling at the Chinese Wall Km 16.

Record-breaking feat

The "eRay" team in car No. 3 were the first consumer contest over the 600 kilometer stage with an average of only 7.19 L/100 km. Thanks to their economical driving style, the "German Trio" team only needed 5.3 liters of diesel for every 100 km on the 416 km-long drive from Landsberg to Weibel. The figures are especially impressive because all participating cars are standard production E-Classes with 165 kW/224 hp. And the luxury sedan didn't have to carry. They always fully loaded with up to three passengers and numerous pieces of luggage. Because of the different road conditions and cold weather all cars were equipped with winter tires and a suspension that was raised by five centimeters.

With a low total average consumption of 6.12 L/100 km diesel fuel for all 36 vehicles, the goal of demonstrating the diesel engines superior fuel efficiency was clearly met on the individual legs as well as over the entire distance. In total the fleet of 36 vehicles consumed about 48,430 liters of low sulfur diesel fuel. That is 10 percent or 10,000 liters less than originally estimated. The participating 36 near-series diesel vehicles consumed only 8,911/100 km. Remarkable the 18 fastest models with long-wheel drive ended up with a slightly higher average of 8,911/100 km.

The 288 participants and 40 person support team had relatively high rest consumption. In addition to breakfast and dinner, between Paris and Beijing they consumed about 8,300 liters of mineral water, 5,500 bananas, 9,000 chocolate bars and 9,000 bottles of mineral water. All participants suffered the strains of the marathon—aside from occasional upset stomachs—in good health, which luckily left the inexperienced physicians hardly accustomed. The entire team with hardly anything to do.

The E-CLASS from Paris to Beijing in 15 days

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BUSINESS

Gov't to issue ₱20B worth of RTBs in Dec.

Auctions of T-bills, T-bonds canceled

By Michelle V Ramos

TO MEET DEMAND FROM SMALL INVESTORS for affordable investment instruments, the government will issue P20 billion worth of Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs) in December.

But to avoid going beyond its borrowing program for this year, the government has canceled the issuance of P15 billion worth of Treasury bills and bonds originally scheduled for Nov. 23, Dec. 6 and Dec. 21.

"The revised schedule reduces the combined governments issuance to moderate to allow investors to give way to individual investors," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz. The exact date of the issuance of the RTBs has yet to be announced.

RTBs, unlike regular T-bills and bonds, are designed for individual or small investors, with the minimum investment requirement set at only P5,000.

Cruz said the government wanted at least P1.5 billion of the amount to go to individual investors, to give institutional investors an opportunity to buy half of the debt offering.

Proceeds from the P2B auction will be used to pay portion of the P15 billion worth of previously issued RTBs maturing in December, Cruz said.

He also said the Bureau of the Treasury would amend the features of the RTBs, such that the instruments would give investors semi-annual rather than quarterly coupons. "We want them (small investors) to be part of the [upper] market," Cruz said.

He explained that making RTBs similar to regular bonds would mean it would be easier for small investors to dispose of their assets in the secondary market.

He said the BTr would closely monitor the distribution of RTBs to make sure that at least half of the debt offering would go to individual investors. The issuance of RTBs is aimed at encouraging indirect, said to boost

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24/7 LIFESTYLE
Editor Chuie Bansil-Formoso
Chief of Correspondent Pam Pastor

Korea fever, *part 2*

We received tremendous feedback from the first part of our special Korea fever issue. We're glad you enjoyed reading it as much as we did working on it. And we're happy to say that the fun isn't over. This week, we present another packed Korean special. These pages are filled with all things Korean—from part two of our tour of Little Korea and your Korean movie and TV recommendations to a Korean fashion and a Korean makeover.

We also have stories from ETC's Sam Oh on what it's like to be a Korean girl in the Philippines, and from Tim Yap who flew to Korea for a fun adventure with the Department of Tourism. Turn the pages and enjoy!

Oh, to grow up Korean in the Philippines!

Being Korean and Pinoy—I can have the best of both worlds

By Sam Oh
24/7 Contributor

I AM FLABBERGASTED WHENEVER I am asked if I consider myself Korean or Filipino. Obviously I'm Korean, but how Korean can one be after living in the Philippines for over 20 years? Does that mean I consider myself Filipino?

Not really.

After all these years, there's still a small point-it-finger-at-me mentality that flares up at the thought of compromising one's roots and an inner voice that screams, "Traitor!"

But when someone talks badly about the Philippines, I want to eat him. I get wildly excited about the World Cup, but Manny Pacquiao embracing Israel stuns me.

I can identify with the normality of both peoples—the bad, the good and the ugly. It's the small identity crisis we made of.

So which am I?

ON, TO GROW UP 24

BLUE polka-dot top, P700; ruffled mini skirt, P850; silver stockings and shoes, model's own

PINK satin dress with black lace detail, P850

Catwalking on the streets

Looking for pretty frilled dresses without spending a fortune? Check out My Little Dress

Text by Bianca Consunji
Intern/Correspondent
Photos by PJ Villabanca

IT'S EASY TO SPOT KOREANS a mile away. All you have to do is look for colored hair and bright, flashy clothes. (For couples, check if they're wearing matching outfits).

Since the Korean invasion started a couple of years ago, many Filipinos have started to sit up and take notice of their interesting sense of fashion. Korean girls, for instance, always seem to be wearing pretty dresses and high-heeled sandals even on the beach, while the young men sport layered clothes and blonde hair.

Of course, not all Koreans have an outrageous sense of fashion, but like the Japanese, they are starting to be known for the way they dress. Although they don't have a famous district like Harajuku in Japan, where everyone's fashion motto is to go over the top, their dramatic clothing style is starting to turn heads—Filipino ones, especially.

Now, lots of stores in Greenhills are full of Korean-inspired fashion. Want imported directly from the country looking for pretty frilled dresses without spending a fortune? Just head to the nearest Korean store, or if you're online savvy, check out My Little Dress, an online store that specializes in Korean clothing.

"Korean clothes are very fashion-forward," says Vanessa Ong, one of the owners of My Little Dress. "The pieces are trendy and wearable at the same time, so it's easy to mix them with your wardrobe staples."

"Koreans are not hesitant to use bright and flashy colors like pink, red, yellow and green. But they also follow fall/winter trends, so right now, stuff like beige, black and purple are hot," she adds.

"My friend Christjane Tan and I decided to bring in Korean pieces because we're fond of browsing through Japanese and Korean fashion magazines, and we really like the cute clothes featured in them. Sometimes, we couldn't find any of them locally, so we decided to import them so people here could start wearing stylish asian fashion like our neighboring countries."

Compared to women from Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, Filipinas have a relatively simple sense of style. Koreans, for instance, are seen as formal wear and are not usually worn on ordinary days. In other countries, there's no need for an excuse to dress up. This is what Ong and Tan seek to change.

Since My Little Dress opened a few months ago, the response for its Korean clothes has been tremendous. Many Filipino women, frustrated by the lack of pretty and affordable dresses, has turned to the online store to get candy-colored clothes and trendy designs. Aside from dresses, My Little Dress also carries coats, jackets, accessories, trendy tops, and other fashion must-haves of the moment (like leggings when they were big several months ago).

"Dresses and jackets are the bestsellers," Ong says. "Our most popular items include the little black dress, white party dress, the tight coat, Pamela jacket, and patent leather shoes."

Fashion-savvy shoppers regularly order new clothes from Ong and Tan, who handpick the clothes they sell online. Items order in many as 1-3 items in one go, as many of the clothes are on a by-order only basis and cannot be bought on the spot. Surprisingly, even items with wild prints and oriental cuts are easily snapped up by buyers.

"I think Filipinas are more fashionable now," Ong says. "They're more experimental and willing to try various trends and styles."

Visit My Little Dress at http://mylittledress.multiply.com

E-mail the author at bianca.consunji@philstar.com

BROWN cotton dress with grosgrain print, P700

BLACK-AND-WHITE dress, P1,200; accessories, stylist's own

STRIPED t-shirt dress, P1,200; tote/diaper bag, P1,800

MAKE ME OVER

Turning Korean

Tony and Jackey Salon comes up with a Korean-inspired beauty metamorphosis

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED a radical change of hairdo, except you don't know how to go about it? Are you bored with your current hairdo and wonder what you can do to give it more life?

Take you cue from 20-year-old SMG correspondent Trina Pap, who gamely volunteered for a funky Korean-inspired makeover courtesy of Tony and Jackey Salon.

"My hair is halo-halo, naturally wavy, and hard to manage so I needed something that won't need high maintenance," said Trina, who also works as a television news program.

Classic cut

For her makeover, senior stylist Tony gave Trina a basic layered cut, and taught her two alternate hairdos to save she wanted a drastic makeover undertook.

Tony added height and volume to Trina's plain see-length cut by shortening its overall length and adding wispy layers on the back and sides. He also gave her long bangs to frame her face.

"I like how it looks," Trina said. "It's close to how my hair naturally looks like, only more polished."

V for Variety

As a variation of her basic layered hairdo, Tony cut and curled Trina's hair into long spirals. He finished off with some glossing serum and a spritz of hair spray.

MAKEOVER girl Trina with Tony and Jackey salon stylist Tony

BEFORE and after, with classic layers in the new hairstyle

ROMANTIC curls

"The second look was fun!" Trina exclaimed. "It's needed new blonde hair and I'd be Goldilocks."

Trina took a walk on the wild side with her hairdo number 2 with more inspired style achieved with a crimper, wax, and lots of hair spray. Apparently, a lot of Korean customers really love Tony and Jackey and ask for radical hairdos.

As for the last look Trina said, "The third was funny. I thought it was a joke, but Tony looked so serious it was surprising to find out people actually ask for that style. Maybe some Halloween fun use."

However, she concluded, "Getting someone to touch my hair was really never outside [my] box I had a fear."

Bianca Consunji

Visit Tony and Jackey at 183 West of Ayala (Mdp., Marikiti, Makati (tel. 893-7571) or check out www.tonyandj.com

Real Koreans, real fashion

By Pam Pastor
Photos and interviews by Ariel Manaweg

TO FIND OUT WHAT REAL KOREAN fashion is, one must look away from the television screens and stay in the streets, where real Koreans walk, where real Koreans fashion dictate.

Dubbed the fake photos of Korean fashion, photographer Ariel Tendero Jocbis Manaweg headed over to the Eastern University and the University of the East and tracked some Korean students down.

These students are a reflection of their own lifestyles—fast, more West, hot and casual, and with an obvious desire to leave their mark on the world.

JEYEON Lee is a 20-year-old tourism student at FEU.

CHO Seung-Ah, 21, is a dentistry student at UE.

KIM Hyun Chul, 26, also a dentistry student at UE.

KIM Soo Hee, 22, is a tourism student at FEU.

HWANG Si-Yun, 21, a management student at FEU.

Bawat patak, nagbibigay hwisag.

Nakikipagtulak kami sa pagpapaunlad ng edukasyon sa pamamagitan ng patong Little Red Schoolhouse Programs. Bukod sa pagpapatibay ng mga proyektong sa mahihirap na komunidad, kami ay nakasanayang ng mga artist at guest pang-kalusugan at komunidad sa pagsasama ng mga guro. Dahil dito, nagiging mas motivasyag ang kinabukasan ng mga kabataan.

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Oh, to grow up Korean in the Philippines!

From page 19

I'm happy to report that I've figured it out but not for a long time.

There was a time when I felt like an absolute outsider in this country. At time when Debonggoy was at the crescendo. It was a dark time for me. It was the time of my (naive) Korean movie here's-addiction-era.

You think your pimple breakouts or your voice that was always cracking at the break of adolescence was bad? Think again.

When you are one of a measly two Koreans (the other one was my cousin, mind you) in the entire block, you cannot help standing out, and all I wanted was to blend in for crying out loud.

And then when your cuteness is the universal expression arrived in surprise, you are robbed of all teasing rights while everyone around you hits the tender forearm to "If you were up to one and asked if "Oh" was my real surname and I said yes and you said, "Oh?" while gawking your self on the back for being so witty and I didn't look amused, that's because it's the oldest comeback in the book and not because you're not witty pa naman!

And then when your mom lovingly packs a sibling of Bimchi for your "class," completely disregarding the fact that this didn't stink to a mile found's to the non-initiated, you are considered a fully-developed oddity.

I seriously think I would have been tossed a lot less if, despite all this, I looked like a china doll. But so my genes would have it, I was skinky and stubby and wore sticky glasses. Fought time, don't get to laugh.

MY initiation to Pinoy curse yous ... fireworks!

CAN you blame my classmates for teasing me?

AH OMB! I'm the "Incredible Edibles" segment on "Razzle Dazzle"

MOMENTOUS "Raised Oh!" footage

AT BAYANIHAN Lolo with a friend

Because my parents firmly believed that the another teenager should not be forgotten, I had to endure an extra day of school, Korean school, that is. Ukkang. It was schlldday every Saturday and I only went for nine years, but it still meant I was deprived of one day of sleeping in and that just wasn't right. I deeply resented feeling extremely deviated.

Dealing with parents

Speaking of my parents, as much as they were a source of encouragement and unconditional love, they were also the cause of my struggles, if you will.

I mean, never mind that they are cultured of in stones, but love do your make. The Pyeon...culture high school students ballroom exceptional dinners, as they are decked out in their evening saree first in the hopes of being asked to slow dance by a circle—make sense to people who grew up this post-cultur environment—but cry shortly after the Korean Pop?

At 17, you are at a loss for words to explain this age-old tradition and resort to demanding they pay for your goddess-inspired dress as ask, wearing you for life. I'm not proud of it.

At 26, however, there are slightly different scenarios. Off-hearing of my friend when I made her of Korean elders around me I keep asking when I'm gonna get married. Stay grandy.

Believe it or not, many parents influence interfere in their children's coupling by taking a matchmaker to find them a suitable partner around the time they hit their late 20s.

I'm not quite there yet but my parents figure I had to be with someone. I plan to marry by 40 to make the "deadline." Some Korean lady even told me I would devastate once I crush the age of like, 30. True story. The whole 30-is-the-new-20 thing is obviously a foreign concept to them.

And then there is the person I will be marrying, if it ever comes to that at all (God don't tell my parents I said that). I know it's a fact that my parents would prefer that I marry a nice Korean man, but I find this very unrealistic.

You put me in a melting pot of nationalities and cultures and curse I am virtually a melting pot myself and I really don't see myself spending the rest of my life with anyone who isn't in a melting pot.

Nah, but who said anything about marrying anytime soon? I'm only 26! Geez, no what I mean?

Third culture

So Korea fever, right? Let me tell you how I know it's really happening with Korea the ultra savvy Koreanovelas."

For as long as I can remember, every Filipino who bothered to ask me where I grew up (relatively stacked off with, "Are you Chinese?" Then they would ask if I was Japanese and I would deny it again. Only then would they ask if I were Korean.

But you know what happens nowadays? More if not all of them, ask if I'm Korean straight up. I take this to mean that Filipinos have seen so many Koreas, have that they are able to recognize the ones between right away.

Most of the Filipinos I meet/am here are cab drivers, by the way. I sometimes play along but other times I just go with whatever their first guess is. If they find out I'm Korean, they will undoubtedly ask how soon I can speak Tagalog and if I'm related to Jacinto. I sorry. But no, dearest. But I'm in pain.

Seriously now. Not too long ago, I drawed upon an article in Time magazine that explained my conflict. In this age of globalization, lots of people are migrating and raising families on foreign soil. On foreign soil there is foreign culture and while the tendency of the current is to preserve their own at home, the children are influenced by all those external forces like their peers and society and media and school and you. The result is a phenomenon known as Third Culture.

Apparently the children create a culture that is neither their parents' nor their environment's and that is what I have done. But aside from being able to simply explain my experiences, this newest enlightenment has also allowed me to take on a slightly different perspective on things.

Whether it's the Philippines or the Korean mindset embrace that's plaguing, I tend to identify very in my cranky. How to my Korean elders and like my Filipino elders unabashedly. And if you asked me to pick only one bet'ween Filipino and Korean food in on the rest of my life, I would most definitely choose a nice show big toast on its shrub rare.

The thing about it is, I don't have to choose. I can have the best of both worlds.

sheer pleasure.
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24/7 LIFESTYLE

Enjoy Korea without flying, *Part 2*

Where do Koreans go to shop? This week's stops—an Internet café, a fashion store, a Christian bookstore and a skincare boutique

By Pam Pastor

OUR SECOND LITTLE Korean adventure took us beyond Myeongdong.

Once again, we took Mr. Johnny Park's time and tried to absorb everything he was telling us about Korea, its people and its culture.

We continued further south and drove over, among other things, a Korean Christian Bookstore and a shop that sold Korean clothes and home products. We also visited one of the branches of a chain of Korean Internet shops and a skincare boutique that has left me (and the friends I took there after the tour) salivating.

These stops were interesting—no doubt about that. But the day I spent with Mr. Johnny and his Filipino officemates must just a treat of Korean-centered schoolinformation. It was a close look at Korean culture and a great chance to spend time with Koreans.

They made me feel welcome. They never failed to offer drinks—and they served them anywhere even if you politely refused. It was normal in a cute sort of way how I found myself sitting at a table with a group of Korean adults, eating coconut biscuits and drinking my milk as they drank their coffee.

I realized how people can connect with people despite the language barrier. I sat with two women and discussed Korean movies with them without words—just gestures and a lot of pointing at photos of movie posters.

All throughout the day, I sensed their pride as they showed me products from their country at their stores. It's the kind that, deep down, we Filipinos used to have for our country and for the longest time, but for many reasons, have lost. Now, we're trying to get it back.

MR. JOHNNY Park

Hearing Mr. Johnny talk about how Koreans love and respect their parents, how parents consider their children as friends who will be with them for the rest of their lives, how families stay together for a very, very long time made me appreciate life in the Philippines and our unbounded family love.

I wasn't alone in my passion for the Philippines I loved listening to Mr. Johnny as he talked about his love for this country and his big vision and his plans about to help this country that he has made his home.

After saying goodbye to Mr. Johnny I ended up walking away not just weary of new places I could drink—it's ended a hot summer somewhere, if I needed skincare products, if I wanted Korean clothes and books—but also ardent in wishfulness.

My Little Korean tour has shown me that the world is huge and cultures are diverse, but people are finding out the more I see traveling now are finding out in the most unlikely of ways every where.

Faster than you can say Internet

MR. DONG HUN LEE'S dream was to provide the fastest Internet service to customers. "I wanted to give them the ultimate gaming experience, a cozy ambience and excellent service."

Station 116—The Fastest Internet was borne out of this dream. The first branch was at Makati Ave.

The head work has paid off. In 2005, Station 116 was given the People's Brand award in Wu Chun net Cafe.

Today the café has six other branches in Iloilo, Subic, Baguio, Bonifacio, Tomas Morato, SM Bicutan Parañaque and Baguio—and 25,000 members.

But Mr. Lee is not ready to rest yet. "We keep renovating and upgrading." Soon, they intend to make Station 116 a one-stop shop for people, supplying the servers to different needs, maybe even including a store for electronic components.

The key word for the people behind Station 116 is service. "We don't want to stop at just the fastest or high-end computers. We want to provide world-class service. We want to be No. 1 not in terms of number but in terms of service."

And when he says service, he's not kidding. There are computers to rent and cubicles for users who want more privacy—and they can be used at no extra charge. There are also jackets hanging from a rack at the back of the café which customers can use if the air conditioning makes them feel cold.

Station 116 charges P60 per hour for non-members and P50 for members. Its membership has different levels. The more time you spend in Station 116, the more discounts and rewards it has for you.

Although there are a lot of Koreans who go to Station 116, Internet savvy Filipinos have fallen in love with the place, too. "I don't want to say this place is just for Koreans. It's for people who want the best service."

Pam Pastor

WORLD-CLASS Internet service

A shop for the face— and more

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

A COUPLE OF YEARS before The Face Shop officially opened in Manila, a young Korean guy walked in, grabbed a basket and started filling it with skincare products.

This story tells me two things: One, even guys love The Face Shop; and two, Koreans were really excited about finally having The Face Shop in the Philippines. And for good reason.

The Face Shop is a popular Korean skincare and beauty brand known for its "natural story" and for offering products that derive their benefits from nature.

Kimberly Ching, part of The Face Shop's marketing team, took us around the store and gave us a tour of their many products.

We previewed/tested:

There are different kinds of mask sheets that do different wonders for your face. Her eyes these are so popular that 50,000 sheets are sold every month in Korea. Each sheet is just 95/-.

There's the Quick and Clear line that fans say is a bestseller. The line, which includes a foam wash, a sebum control toner, a whitening mist, a eye cream, a hydro fluid and a first-aid gel, promises to be a quick solution to acne and other skin troubles. The first-aid gel is a favorite, Kim said.

The Face Minimizer line is another popular choice. People with enlarged pores can turn to the controlling powder in toner, emulsion, essence, cream and serum to help minimize their pores.

The White Tree Spot Corrector is another special product. People love it for its promise in whitening dark spots.

The Face Shop doesn't want you to wait for love and romance to make your face have that natural glow its tension line, which is formulated with 25 natural ingredients, promises to keep your skin healthy and beautiful. The skin softeners, essences emulsion, lotions or serums and special serum contain Hinoki's Dripper Berry and Ume Extract, nature's natural skin magicians. "We call it love in a bottle. We also call it our happy line," said Kim.

Men will be pleased to know that The Face Shop offers a lot of products for them—and why not? The Face Shop's celebrity endorser is Kwon Sang Woo, one of Korea's hottest actors.

The Face Shop has a brightening cloth whitening line for men, and Chois Chois's Pure, a line of products that bounce a toner, an emulsion and shaving foam that are low in alcohol, oil and fragrance for men with rough and sensitive skin. Nanolux extract purify the skin while nourishing enzyme softens production, tightening pores and keeping skin hydrated."

The Face Shop also offers shower and shelves of hair care—from wax and clay to shampoo and hair conditioners.

There's a huge selection of cosmetics with a wide array of colors guaranteed to make you go crazy. Dewy flower powder, Delicious Lip Gloss, Glamour Mascara, Black Label Eye Shadow Soft Shadow, and That . . . the choices seem endless. And don't even get us started on the fragrances and nail polishes.

Walk into The Face Shop with your cash, your friends to help you decide) and a lot of time—you'll need it to make all those beauty choices.

The Face Shop has branches in Glorietta, SM Mall of Asia and The Block in SM North Edsa.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

ENDLESS choices. The Face Shop offers products for all skin types.

Bookstore for Christian Koreans

THERE ARE A LOT OF Korean Christians in the country and Mr. Kim Young Hun and his wife Jeong Hwa Lee realized it was about time they had their own bookstore.

"The society needed the kind of literature," Mr. Kim said.

Korean Christian Bookstore was opened in January of this year. The first of its kind in the Philippines, Mr. Kim sells Bibles and spiritually books in Korean. The shelves are packed with inspirational books—some of them translated from the "The Purpose Driven Life."

Korean Christian Bookstore also sells home decor and paper products with spiritual slogans. Things to make great last for, I said Mr. Kim.

Koreans—and even Filipinos—with a need for Korean Bibles and inspiring words now know where to go, Pam Pastor

SPIRITUAL Books and inspiring words

CLOTHES, accessories and home decor can all be found at Go Wears Boutique

More than just Korean fashion

FROM MAKATI, WE DRIVE ALL THE way to SF Homes Parañaque to visit Ms Helen Kim and Go Wears Boutique.

Ms Helen decided to open her store in 2008, after realizing that many Koreans living in the Philippines have a hard time finding clothes to match their style in the middle heat.

Ms Helen goes to Korea regularly to buy items that she knows her clients would appreciate. A lot of individualities, she stocks clothes in different styles—from feminine and flirty to casual and sporty. She also carries for men and women. Go Wears Boutique also offers a lot of accessories—from shoes and bags to jewelry and hair clippers.

Go Wears is home and kitchen fashion too as products for the home as well. Ms Helen also stocks blankets and even kitchenware for Korean cooking for those curious fans of home and for Pinays who want to give their homes a Korean touch.

Just how much do Koreans love Ms Helen's boutique? Some of them travel from Quezon City to Parañaque for some Go Wears shopping.

Visit Go Wears Boutique at 132 Aguila cor. SF Homes Parañaque. 11:00 a.m.–8 p.m. every day except Sunday. —Pam Pastor

MS HELEN Kim and Christ

TASTE or spot some of the reasons why we're going GMA-hunting.

Your own Korean hit list

2NUF readers and K-addicts unite and share their lists of must-see Korean movies and drames

LAST WEEK, WE ASKED YOU tell us about your own favorite Korean movies and dramas. You responded—really responded. Our inbox was flooded with countless recommendations.

Our post-winner really because you'll definitely be flipping this article 'fer are one... and we're going hunting for non-Korean DVDs.

Jing Ang Ang Ang and the Cheese," which has raised awards in festivals also recommends "Sonata: Love or Work Comic". "My Boyfriend is Type B," a romantic comedy about the dweeb that Tyler Hawkins says are more difficult to write, and "Marrying the Mafia I & 2," which she says are "four-act comedies."

Sybil Bulosan writes: "I was so elated when Sonata 2005 published more Korean focuses. I'm a big K-drama fan. I'm sure you made many Korean dramas (and movies) fans happy. I'll recommend the past ones!"

Nate her own favorite Korean dramas are part of post runs... "Full House," "Endless Love," "Autumn in My Heart" and "Lovers in Paris."

She also recommends the movie "How To Steal a Love," which she says is "a funny romantic comedy about a 30-something subway worker who tried to make her boyfriend of seven years to pop the question."

'Love Story in Harvard'

Ari and Cristina are all jealous for "Love Story in Harvard." Ari raves, "I'm not really into Korean movies or even Asian or foreign ones, but 'Love Story in Harvard' drama on GMA-7 got me hooked. Maybe because it talks a lot on how a man's mind and heart works or how strong and weak a man can be in terms of love, principles and career. My wife loves this movie, too. 'Love Story in Harvard' inspired us a lot. We appreciate each other more now and it was sound weird and corny but I feel like our love became stronger and my wife and the 5th 12 years younger now/single."

Jing who calls herself "a certified addict," agrees with Ari and Cristina. "Love Story in Harvard' is definitely one of the most romantic Korean movies ever made. Kim Tae Hee and Kim Rae Won have the best on screen chemistry I've ever seen. It depicts a love story you'll remember for a long time. Even though you've seen the entire edition/version, you can't help to see all over the screen again. Your 16 hours of TV time is well worth it."

Linda is also another GMA reader who loves "Love Story in Harvard." "I never thought I would be totally super hooked (to the highest level) on a Koreanovela or any other series until 'Love Story in Harvard' premiered on Philippine television. This great romantic drama has really influenced me a lot and has changed my lifestyle."

You're an addict if...

Agnes did not just send us a list of movies she wanted to recommend to film fans ("Snapshot" or "The Brotherhood of Mu," "The Promise" and "Typhoon" top her list.) She also paid tribute to her favorite Korean actors—Jung Dong Gun, Wonbin and yes, Rain (!). She also warned us what to watch out for. "You're a Korean movie addict if you are..." wrote:

Agnes says you're an addict if "you've grown interest in music and its culture, if you plan seriously to go to Korea, and if you decide to Korea and joined a package tour just like mine I did two weeks ago!" She definitely has convinced.

Gina Lovegood, also a big fan of "Love Story in Harvard," added her own items to the symptoms. She says you know you're hooked "if it makes [some] of you to shake his ass and fan-made music videos" and "if it becomes gave you a reason to maximize the use of technology to ease your addiction."

Oh A, the owner of Starbooks in Tagaytay, is addicted as well. "I would like to thank you for featuring one of my favorite Korean movies—'My Little Bride,' in your Korean movie marathon list, and thank you also for mentioning 'My Sassy Girl,' 'Windstruck' and 'Hot Gimlet.'"

She also sent us her own list of must-see Korean films: "A Moment to Remember," "Stairway," "Maddeleine," "Tempted" and "Love In Heaven." And if you are looking for other Korean film fans, Oh A is inviting you to visit her group in http://groups.yahoo.com/group/maddeleine.

48 movies in 2 months

Ginny tried to love with Korean movies after watching "My Sassy Girl." She felt so much she ended up watching over 40 Korean movies in just two months. Her favorites are "Sad Movies," "Thrs and Furious," "The Art of Seduction," "Someone Stops," "A Moment to Remember," "He Was Cool" and "Love In Heaven."

Chito recommends "Spin Kick," a comedy about sports. Rachel lists "Marathon," which features just about the sports featuring a comedy about an autistic young man who overcomes his inner and outer world throughout a marathon.

She also likes "Kiss," "Smelly Tire" or "Kimi ni a Bertly," "Tempest Tempting to Chair Over," "My Scary Girl," "A Moment to Remember" and "Maddeleine."

Feel-good story

Mary Grace wrote comprehensive mini-reviews of her favorites. She says "All Moments by the Use" is a must-watch because of good storytelling. "A Moment to Remember" because you wanted see how you embrace all things," and "All For Love" "I also feel good story isn't enough." She also recommends "Failan," which features "moving characters and an uplifting ending," as well as "Lovely Rivals" and "Typhoon."

Mae Campsit is a big fan of Korean dramas as well. "I am an avid fan of Korean dramas. When I started hoping those Korean dramas DVDs, it was intended to stir my eyes in preparation for a good night's sleep. But it turned out to keep me awake until the wee hours. I did not regret that there would be a lot of Korean drama fanatics. My mom and aunts are also Korean drama fanatics. We talk about it every time we have a family reunion. We update each other on the latest Korean dramas. I just bought a new DVD player for our bedroom so I can watch Korean dramas."

She has her own recommendations: "My favorites are 'Stairway' to Heaven,' 'Winter Sonata,' 'Autumn Love Story,' 'Winter Sonata' and Spring Waltz.'"

She has her own list of favorites, such as "Please Teach Me English," "Glass," "Secretary" and "Winter Sonata."

Another GMA reader we see, "Maybe you'd also like to see 'He was Cool,' starring Song Seung Hun and Jung Da Bi. This one's really funny—the shy handsome lad was falling for the spirited sweet ugly duckling type. Truly hilarious! And many thanks for coming up with the article. I didn't know I was so hooked even the last flicks till I scanned the movies on your list and realized I'd seen almost all of it." Mon Pastor

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Text and photos by Tini Tay

MY SEOUL SOJOURN began not in Korea, but right here in our islands.

Koreans does not have an off-peak season because of Koreans. Even in their weight-maladies-in-the-sand glory and honeymooner's marching order, they usually look out to see their Korean way.

I remember coming home one time from abroad, where the whole immigration crowd area was filled with Koreans—I looked like one myself. In fact, when I closed my, people often mistake me to be a Korean diver. Well, I'm from Olo long-lost brother. You ok.

My links to Korea is not limited to looks, though. I realized on a recent trip to Seoul that, indeed, the Philippines has found a "friend zone" in the land of kimchi. That the Department of Tourism (DOT) has really been "working it" and directing Koreans to our shores because somehow the Koreans are comfy in our country. Why shouldn't they? They feel cold here (well, if you're right below North Korea, yes, you'll feel soft snowflakes) and their lives high regard for Filipinos (and vice versa).

Korean love affair

But our love affair with Korea started when I had dinner with Yoo-Jin Kim, Koreanowski actress and endorser of brand Philippines as her native Korea. We had dinner upon the invitation of Ambassador Bureau of PCVC (Philippine Convention and Visitor Center), which works with the DOT for these promotions, a whole crew of 30 media people from Korea flew in and joined us for dinner, and then I brought all of them to Embassy Superclub so that they would get to experience what Manila nightlife is all about.

That night, I had to dance with a dozen of them—all in the same time! I felt like a "Korean exile" as I hopped from one person to another—but I had a great time as Koreans are so fun-loving as Filipinos—that I declare emphatically MTV Korea and other networks assigned on on the station as they interviewed the actor's participation as an invited actor Korean can go to video to our Motherland and enjoy RP to the fullest.

The DOT has been promoting the Philippines not only as a travel, leisure and honeymoon destination, but as an education center as well, thus the influx of Koreans to Philippine schools from Ateneo to Ada. When I was in university, I remember having a Korean classmate. Of course, his name was Kim, and I was in Bagbok mine. He would pay me by the hour (as a tutor, but you think of other things)

Passion has a way of turning into obsession as Michelle Dala Asencio, owner of Zen Zeal will tell you. Even at an early age, Michelle was fascinated by events, going as far as making her own exercise ways by hand. Naturally, she turned her obsession into a business. Today, Zen Zeal has grown to 41 outlets nationwide, all of which are on fours.

Keeping track of so many outlets can be a daunting task even for the most meticulous of people. Deliveries, inventories, sales figures and even staff attendance — Sun simplifies all that. "Before, it was so difficult to get sales figures. Now, no more excuses for my salespeople not to report. Especially since it's 24/7 Unlimited, reasonable ang stress kasi you're not tense sa babayaran mo."

With Sun, everything is simple and economical. Best of all, you finally have your peace of mind. How very Zen.

Every year, Sun works more than P11 billion to increase coverage and capacity, working harder to allow more calls, and texts, anytime, anywhere.

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NUTS

LOVEMORE

ATOMO AND WEBBY

DIVINE COMEDY

BIRD MACHINE

MANDRAGORAS

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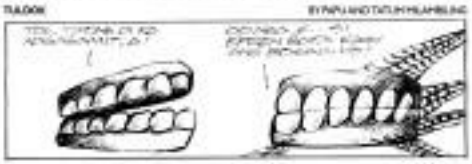

BEN

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

		9	5	8	7	4		
	3						9	
	8						5	
		8	1	9	6	5		
		6	7	2	4	1		
	9						8	
	7						1	
		4	3	7	2	9		

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	3	8	6	7	1	2	5
5	1	6	3	2	4	8	9	7
7	8	2	5	1	9	3	6	4
4	3	8	9	7	1	6	5	2
6	9	1	4	5	2	7	3	8
2	5	7	6	3	8	9	4	1
3	7	4	2	8	5	9	1	6
1	2	9	7	4	3	5	8	6
8	6	5	1	9	6	2	7	3

SEOUL STRUCTURE... From temples to palaces to multi-complexes, Korea has it all.

KOREANS cultures is rich and full of time-setting rituals and celebrations, just like ours.

Seoul-searching

From page 11

and we would spend the entire afternoon speaking English together. This was a couple of years ago. Now, ESL, or English as Second Language courses, have been put up all over the country, in universities, colleges and schools just for the purpose of training Koreans. After all, we are the leading English language speakers in this region. The DOT set up a giant area comprised of 16 booths (single booths the booth upon it occupied but next, when we first participated in the event) to make Koreans more kicher to our shores and study English.

Roberto Bunce Elmer heads the session for the DOT, and I met her Team Korea folks in Seoul and was amazed at how much they knew about and love our country! One guy from the Team Korea marketing staff, his name was Ben (don't get anywhere), even grew up and studied in Baguio, and then he continued and got a diploma in one very easy University of the Philippines. He Filipino to even better than some of my friends. He and his posse have a deep understanding of what and how it is to be Filipino. Even if he lived in our Filipino, his heart is very much though.

Allies and brothers

The next few days would take me shopping (Korea has giant malls, too—complete with maps upon entry to them... the malls are that massive), Korea even has 24-hour malls (Dongdaemun malls!). I am not if an honorary Korean since that I bought a ton of that Korean chili paste—I add it on in everything I eat) and went party and club-hopping (but of course!).

Throughout my food-searching, I met many of our Korean brothers, broke bread with them and discussed cultural exchanges, pleasantries and more. I realized their desires lies in their skills in usage, their hard work and big picture world view. They do not look at us as Third World brothers, they look at us as allies; they see our careers and lives with, and even if they have to learn their language just for them to be able to connect, they will. Hard work ALWAYS pays off—look at where they are now.

It's funny that sometimes, it is through the eyes of people from other cultures that we learn to appreciate the value of one's self. In this case, my bond-searching has led me to be happier with what we have, at the same time to strive and aim for higher goals—hopefully through our Korean brothers and sisters, though we find them amusing and culturally quirky, we can learn more from them than we could ever imagine.

So, to our Korean comrades, kamsa hamnida!

SEOUL FOOD: Tim Pagtalunan and Korean cereal host (—pure)

YEAH PHILIPPINES: Jessa Maradjan, Jennifer Ong, Bernardine Crispo PR, Mario Sevilla and Marissa Ibarra Ebron, team leader

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: My nervous guarding the "Jewels of this palace"

KOREA-NOY: Pan Kim is a Korean who grew up in Baguio and finished his studies in UP

CEBU'S MAIN ATTRACTIONS: Tech Cuila and Myka Lizares-Regino

X-HOLIDAY AROUND TOWN: Wardie, praise and query around this soulful city.

KALUSUGANG EAR NOSE AND THROAT CORNER

Series 4

What Is Hoarseness?

Hoarseness (paos-ensia in Pilipino) is an abnormal voice change. The voice may sound breathy, raspy, strained, or there may be changes in volume (loudness) or pitch.

What Are The Causes Of Hoarseness?

- *Acute Laryngitis* is the swelling of the vocal cords resulting from common cold, upper respiratory tract infection, or shouting, screaming or excessive coughing.
- *Vocal Nodules* are also known as "singer's nodules or teacher's nodules" which result from excessive and improper use of voice over long periods of time.

- *Laryngopharyngeal Reflux* is a condition when stomach acid comes up to the throat and irritates the vocal cords. These people may have a sensation of a lump in their throat.
- *Laryngeal Cancer* is a dreaded cause of hoarseness. Smoking is a risk factor. See an ENT specialist if hoarseness lasts for more than 2 weeks.

How Is Hoarseness Evaluated?

- History
- ENT examination of the vocal cord
- Special Examination:
  - Endoscopy
  - Videostroboscopy

When Should I See An Otolaryngologist (ENT doctor)?

- Hoarseness lasting longer than two weeks especially if you smoke
- Pain not from a cold or flu
- Coughing up blood
- Difficulty swallowing
- Lump in the neck
- Loss or severe change in voice lasting longer than a few days

How Is Hoarseness Treated?

Treatment depends on the cause.

- Voice rest
- Anti-inflammatory medicines
- Surgery of the vocal cords

How To Prevent Hoarseness

- Quit smoking
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid spicy foods
- Avoid shouting or straining your voice
- Seek professional voice training
- Avoid speaking or singing when you are hoarse

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Learning Hangul

By Free Katigbak

UNDER THE impression that lessons were strict, especially with punctuality, I came 30 minutes early on my first day of Korean-language classes. The school, however, was still closed.

An hour later, the owner arrived and, in my dismay, seemed to know no more than a student but

At the time, singing 'Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star' in Korean felt somewhat juvenile and silly, but it helped me learn the language in a practical way

나비
[nabi]

모자
[moja]

enrolled for morning session which is soon to begin that day.

She walked in a quick pace, punctuated by the high-pitched clunking of her heels. Either she was not a loud person or in her mannerisms (maybe it was definitely not the time to risk guessing) we were her audience had mesmerized me.

Inside the school, the owner explained in broken English that there were no teachers available for the day. She asked if we could settle for in a kinder garten-type library while I presumed she gathered her instructional materials.

But when she returned to the room, she held nothing else but a Korean reader, cartoon-wrapped popsicle sticks, the right in half.

"Tijh, ajh" were the sounds I heard from her to the shrewd half of the word in my hand. The other half—indeed silence let already dripping—she held to her mouth, apparently to show me how to eat it.

Her impression didn't last. I realized

My unfortunate Korean-language teacher, the owner (me I believe) had the potential to bite my head off (commands ago), learned not to be a nice lady. She spoke just En-

오리
[ori]

glish but specialized in teaching little kids how to write Language.

We both struggled through the first hour of mini-talk, she still has limited English and I with my zero knowledge of Hangul, the Korean language, not to mention.

I felt like a kindergartner trying to pass her ABCs, only this time there was more to memorize—14 basic vowels, 14 basic consonants and 16 compound characters in place of the 26-letter Roman alphabet.

Another major difficulty was pronunciation. Even as I finally learned every vowel and syllable, no matter how I've they spoke. The slightest change of pronunciation could alter the syllable, word or phrase, and the meaning.

I was embarrassed with my pronunciation of the vowels ㅐ (pronounced ㅔ), ㅚ (pronounced ㅟ), which came out weak and detached from the rest of what I had to say.

Though she didn't express it, I knew the tutor finally assigned to me got frustrated with my failed attempts to learn her language.

Then, again, I thought the experience of teaching me the Hangul version of "Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star." In one session, the song is—vaguely I might add—with me today.

At the time, singing felt somewhat juvenile and silly, but it helped me learn the Korean language in a practical way.

Given a year, but passed since my boyfriend's Korean student, I remember some basic conversations of phrases but the rest I can barely recall, owing to the fact that I'm unable to practice with someone who speaks Hangul.

I plan to take the intermediate level next year. In the meantime, though, I better brush up on singing Korean translations of children's songs.

E-mail the author at (katig-bak@inquirer.com.ph)

야채
[yachae]

Learn Korean Expressions

Korean	English
Anahseng Haseyo	How are you?
Mannaso Bangaweoyo	Nice to meet you.
Yeboseyo	Hello
Cheonmaneyo	You're welcome!
Anahnghi Gaseyo	Goodbye
Haeal Bayo	See you tomorrow?
Sylle Hamnida	Excuse me.
Mian Hamnida	I'm sorry
Mulon Ieoraiji!	Of course!
Dowa drilliayo	Can I help you?
Dowa juseyo	Please help me.
Kamsa Hamnida!	Thank you
Ulmayeyo?	How much?
Hanin Opsoyo?	No discount?
Mul Juseyo	Water, please
Mat isoyo!	It's delicious
Bae bulleyo.	I'm full
Bangapgayo.	I'm hungry
Joayo!	All right/Okay
Gapsida	Let's go!
Anieo	No way!
Ye	Yes
Ane	No
Upseyo	None
Yeheon	Passport
Don	Money
Pangpyo	Ticket

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ENTERTAINMENT

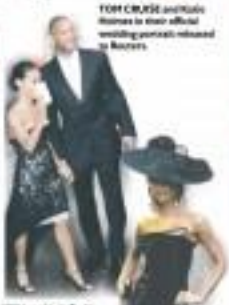
Edna Bonnie G. Velarde

Wedding of the Year

... in the lakeside town of Bracciano, Italy

Story on page F2

BROOKE Shields and husband Chris Henchy. Her attendance was described as "symbolic."



TOM CRUISE and Katie Holmes in their official wedding portrait released to Reuters.

Will and Jada Smith

JIM CARREY and girlfriend Jenny McCarthy

GUEST Victoria Beckham exuds a moment

this week

Live

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U.P. College of Music

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Dr. Raymond Diaz, Tenor
Greg Abalarde de Leon, Baritone

assisted by the University of the Philippines Orchestra
under the baton of Prof. Rodney Ambat and Prof. Edna Marcil Martinez

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NOV 25 (SAT) THE PODIUM
NOV 27 (MON) SM CITY MANILA
NOV 29 (WED) SM SOUTHMALL
NOV 28 (TUE) THE BLOCK (at SM City North Edsa)
NOV 30 (THU) SM MALL OF ASIA

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GALLERIA

1 CASINO ROYALE • THX	6 BORAT
2 FRAGILE	7 HAPPY FEET
3 THE COVENANT	8 WAG KANG LILINGON
4 PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE	9 GIGIL
5 HAPPY FEET	10 ZU WARRIORS

ERMITA

1 CASINO ROYALE	
2 PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE	5 BORAT
3 GIGIL	6 WAG KANG LILINGON
4 HAPPY FEET	7 ZU WARRIORS

METRO EAST

1 CASINO ROYALE	5 GIGIL
2 HAPPY FEET	6 ZU WARRIORS
3 WAG KANG LILINGON	7 FRAGILE
4 BORAT	8 PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE

NOVALICHES

1 CASINO ROYALE	6 PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	8 GIGIL
3 HAPPY FEET	7 FRAGILE
4 BORAT	

CITISQUARE MALABON / PIONEER

CITISQUARE MALABON	PIONEER
1 CASINO ROYALE	1 HAPPY FEET
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	2 BORAT
3 RESERVE	3 CASINO ROYALE
4 RESERVE	4 PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE

SHOWING at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD on NOVEMBER 22

STA. ROSA / LIPA

STA. ROSA	LIPA
1 CASINO ROYALE	1 CASINO ROYALE
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	2 WAG KANG LILINGON
3 BORAT	3 HAPPY FEET
4 GIGIL	4 GIGIL

DASMARINAS / ANGELES

DASMARINAS	ANGELES
1 CASINO ROYALE	1 CASINO ROYALE
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	2 WAG KANG LILINGON
3 HAPPY FEET	3 GIGIL
4 GIGIL	4 HAPPY FEET

IMUS / STARMILLS

IMUS	STARMILLS
1 CASINO ROYALE	1 CASINO ROYALE
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	2 WAG KANG LILINGON
3 HAPPY FEET	3 GIGIL
4 GIGIL	4 HAPPY FEET
	5 BOX
	6 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

BACOLOD / ILOILO

1 CASINO ROYALE	1 CASINO ROYALE
2 WAG KANG LILINGON	2 WAG KANG LILINGON
3 HAPPY FEET	3 GIGIL
4 THE GRUDGE 3	4 HAPPY FEET
5 THE MARINE	
6 CAKE	

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NEW YORK—T
ish weekend
of Tom Cru
Katie Holmes have ru
both of the singular U
relationship between
HOMES.

The divorcees, romantic
a 15th-century castle in I
Italy, are reminiscent of
tale quite as of the street
The much younger Holme
once tantalized that she
wearing to wed the "Mah
star.

"I used to think I was goi
ry Tom Cruise," Holmes r
teen magazine before
Cruise, 44, began dating.

But the young girl that
to Tinseltown never have
nuit nes. They have not
reasons for extreme publi
perceived peculiarity. In
are a relationship that m
emotionally undernined.

Long, long kiss

After exchanging vows
Scientology minister
Cruise and Holmes enjo
"never-ending kiss," acc
Rinaldo Amaino, who al
wedding ceremony. Cruise sa
the mother of his children, J
and their baby, Suri.

That kiss could be seen
pressure as an reminder of
how the couple are in lo
has openly displayed affec
announced that he and Holm
2005 in Rome. Just a mo
Cruise was hopping on TV
host Oprah Winfrey's couch

Many were skeptical of
the top emotion, suspicio
was an act to help publ
Cruise's first personal appeal
the Shield" and "Batman
But those critics were
joyously rejected when,
June 2006, the couple bec
engaged in Paris' Eiffel T
re—happily posing for pho
reporters and partners from
shely of travel.

The relationship, Ho
magazine reports editor-i
Bankers remained in the
"was presented fully baked
public consumption."

Very special guest

In stark contrast, the ce
did not provide the publ
peek of Suri until 1 1/2 mo
after her April 18 birth. I
ing to reveal special inform
the child and even exist. The
ple finally unveiled her, tw
magazine Hola!, on the cov
Family Portrait magazine.

Many celebrities attra
the Cruise-Holmes magn
but the pregnant couple
studios was Brooke Sha
Cruise had very publicly c
stood Shields' in taking a st
pressures after the birth of
late daughter, her apology
to her in person a few mo
ago.

The actor's perspective
antidepressants echoes the
Scientology. The practices
beliefs of Scientology—a
ghts many other celebr

y of TomKat
wedding
actly clear

KATIE and Tom met for Tomas de Ottosdóttir Cruise.

practice—are unfamiliar and strange to much of the public.

The birth of Suri was surrounded by reports that the couple would have a "silent birth," in which no one surrounding the mother speaks. And the couple's vow Saturday included certain Scientology fundamentals, such as promising never to go to bed without communicating about any differences.

Tiff with Paramount

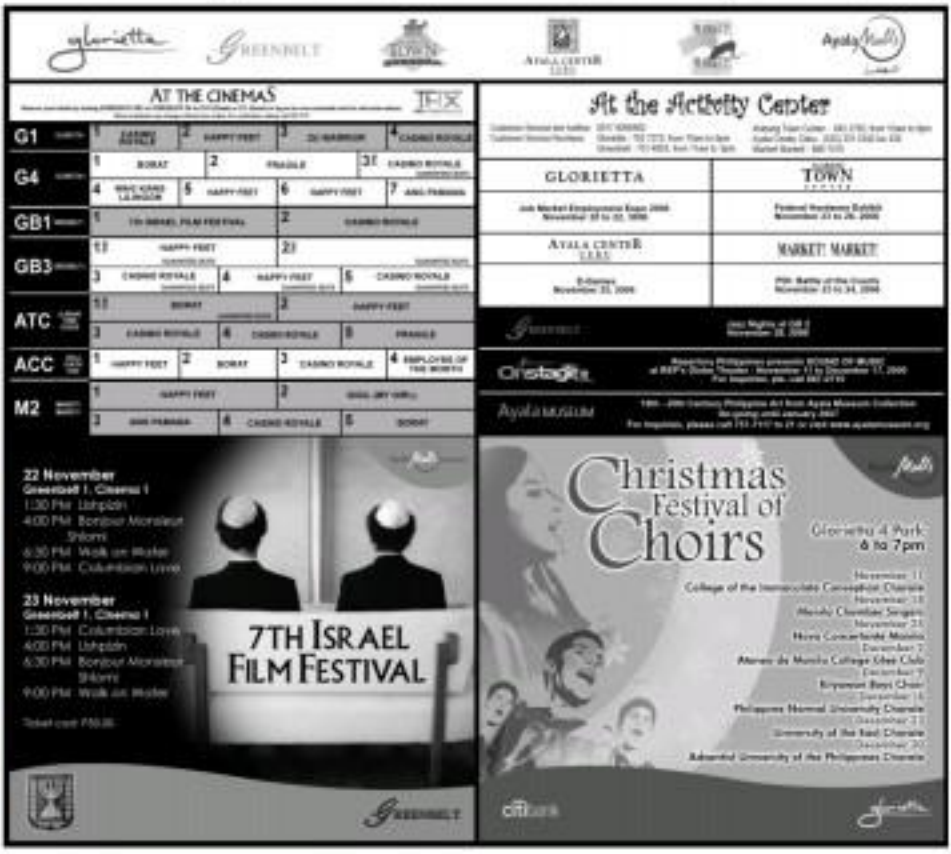
Cruise's aggressive defense of Scientology was one of the reasons former Hollywood chairman of Paramount Pictures parent company Viacom Inc., claimed was behind Paramount's decision to break ties with Cruise after a long and lucrative relationship.

The "Mission: Impossible" star quickly rebounded. Earlier this month it was announced that Cruise and his producing partner, Paula Wagner, were taking over the Hollywood movie studio United Artists.

The legal circumstances of the couple's Italian wedding were not clear, since it was performed by a Scientology celebrant. Cruise's publicist, Arnold Robinson, said the couple had "officiated their marriage in Los Angeles before their departure for Italy," adding that customary he-cow-plies marrying outside the United States.

The public, of course, loves a big movie-star marriage, for will the nuptials ceremony help Cruise and Holmes restore a measure of normalcy to their relationship, or serve as yet another unique spectacle?

Which neither user requested back on the big screen soon (Cruise is slated to begin shooting "Lions for Lambs" with Robert Redford in January; Holmes has nothing planned): it will be a while before the box office predictor do-overs. — Jake Coyle, AP



F4 ENTERTAINMENT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2006

Opening This Week

Gigi

Stars: Kaitlyn Hadid, Alfred Vargas, Jeri Alcasid
Directed by: Jun Lana

This sexy summer movie of the big brands of BIGGIL PINK sings about Daisy this year, and the classroom debut of Princess returning: sculptress Lyra. Hadid plays a bride who has off to Boracay after leaving that her groom is gay. In paradise, she meets a diva model (Vargas) who rekindles the flames of her desire. Rubi describes Jun Lana as "easy-going, Beyoncé cool."

Ang Pamana: The Inheritance

Stars: Phoemela Baranda, Mutya Ikeri, Sara Neale
Directed by: Romeo Candido

This "Aspe-inspired Chiller" mixes traditional folklore and lessons-learned-the-hard-way messages. Ed Camelbeen reveals it as cleverly scary. Graded A by the Cinema Evaluation Board, the scream fest premiered at the Hawaii International Film Festival. The CEB commends Baranda's acting, the musical score by Gerard Salonga and the cinematography by Odyssey Flores. Candido received the Admiral Award for Young Cinema of the 2002 Cinemalaya Festival.

Happy Feet

With the voices of: Elijah Wood, Robin Williams, Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman
Directed by: George Miller

According to many Pollsters, this summer of Robin's is a close between "Watch of the Penguins" and "Mouth to Mouth." Mumble is shunned by his fellow emperor penguins because he can't carry a tune. He, however, can dance up a storm. Get Mumble Osgay of the New York Times: "Beauty resources is still quirky in [the film] — An politically profound as it is [other] song." Todd McCarthy of Variety counters: "Steers no mistaking ... [it's] a work of a real filmmaker, in terms of composition, camera movement and editing. [It's] memorable, continuously enthralling pressure and several levels."

Zu Warriors

Stars: Zhi Zhang, Cecilia Cheung, Jimmy Wang, Patrick Tam
Directed by: Tsui Hark

The valorous King Sky leads nine Korean warriors of Zhu to clog it up with the Chinese, to save their ball-tipped princess. Kenneth Leung of The Feeder opines that it's because epic "showcases a variety of heartbreaking visual effects and light scenes [so] the plot would no longer ease the audience confused at times." Mary Magee of Movie Habit, on the other hand, argues that computer-generated effects are slick — but the script is somewhat dated, with some ripped-from-the-headlines references." Anthony Leung of Media Green quips "Instead of the number of all martial arts films, the Zhang Yimy director] ends up with a like that's pretentious and [one] totally cold."

Fragile

Stars: Calista Flockhart, Yasmin Murphy, Elena Anaya, Gemma Jones, Richard Roxburgh
Directed by: James Balaguero

Without nurse (Flockhart) to tend to work in a factory or plunge (her will soon be polished. The luckless environment soon discovers the children hospital's horrifying secret. According to the Spanish director, Flockhart "reached [herself] to the limit ... we did 15 takes. If were burning." Rich of Rotten] comments that "the first 20 minutes are genuinely creepy ... The director] manages to create a good atmosphere." Anne in the Need.com thinks the "highly Hyperion premise was quite unusual. [The director] has a great eye and he is properly capitalized on his setting." The movie was shot in Barcelona, Spain.

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan

Stars: Sacha Baron Cohen, Pamela Anderson, Ken Davitian
Directed by: Larry Charles

Cohen, Cambridge-educated star of the BBC hit "Da Ali G Show," takes his irreverent humor, a fine satirical knife-edge reported, on a road trip across "US and A"—to learn from Americans and woo a "Baywatch" beauty. Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter raves: "This year you are not going to find a more appalling, ruthless, grotesque, politically incorrect comedy than "Ocean Globes team of Entertainment Weekly describes Borat as "a walking checkmark of, a fusion of Andy Kaufman and Howard Stern." Anwen Tom Chasity of CNN: "If there's any justice, Cohen will walk away with the year's Oscar for Best Actor, Musical or Not as this. There is no Pollster for underdog reporting, too. For all its hilarity, it cuts deep. Intrusive isn't for the faint of heart."

Thank You For Smoking

Stars: Aaron Eckhart, Maria Bello, Katie Holmes, Rob Lowe
Directed by: Jason Reitman

Based on Christopher Buckley's "savagely satirical novel," the film follows the exploits of a lobbyist for a cigarette companies. Bernardo Tanis of Los Angeles Times says the film's "strength [the novel's] dry humor and blunt comic sensibility." Bryant Thomson of Washington Post disagrees: "Its underlying commentary—that second Amendment is part and parcel of Hollywood's everyday business—is hardly earth-shattering news." Eschewed by CBW, [illegible]

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ENTERTAINMENT

THE BEAT GOES ON

...and the music keeps playing for "Search for the Star in a Million" champ Preechie Ds, who recently suffered from Bell's Palsy, a condition that paralyzes the facial muscles. Back on her feet, she stars in her own show, "The Time I Am Serenaa," Nov. 25, 9 p.m., at Zirkoh Bar in Tiong, Quezon City.

UNTV show apologizes

By Reuyal San Diego Jr.

A TALK SHOW AIRED ON UNTV 37, a UHF station, got in trouble with the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) on account of a spiel loaded with sexual innuendo.

In a Nov. 2 memorandum signed by board chair Atty. Consuelo F. Laguardia, the show "Chika Mo, Chika Ko" was put "to task for violations repeatedly committed on Sept. 16 by its host, identified by board secretary Gloria de los Reyes as Jessyn Jhean Gloriano."

The show airs live at 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Laguardia's memo said Manicano uttered the following remark: "Ano ang tamot kay Tyrone arise | Cardo Aquino? Baka ano ire — Multi size pwe unlukan ng tate! Pilhan the latest with Cardo Aquino? He's well hig! He's short but huge!"

The said host showed sexy starlet and actor Alfonz Anor "holding a microphone suggestively and saying 'Wow!'"

Laguardia's letter was addressed to Good Catch Entertainment's Roderick Mesa, executive producer, who was invited to the board's Quezon City office on Nov. 9.

In the meeting, Good Catch was represented by Jovan Macapon who "proudly admitted" the violation.

The program was suspended for two episodes, Nov. 11 and 18. Its producer was instructed to issue an apology addressed to the board itself.

Assurance

Lastly, the show's hosts were asked to assure the public that the violation would not be repeated once the show returns on air.

On Nov. 10, Mesa sent a letter of apology to Laguardia, "with regard to the misbehavior on our program."

He "accepted" the suspension order and "promised never to commit the same mistake in our live programs, but we will never suppress [our hosts'] freedom of speech."

He also stated that the hosts would issue a public apology to the show's Nov. 25 episode.

MTRCB PG-13

Alfred Vargas Bianca King Ketchup Eusebio Say Alonzo

Katrina Halili

in

gigil

a film by Jun Lana

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Nakakagigil na kilig.
Nakakagigil ang kanyang ganda.

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   Example: MMJAZZ 99018
3. M&M's® parties with the Jazz Up Your Christmas 2 winners must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
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5. Promo includes both Globe, Sun Cellular Smart, Touch Mobile & Text Subscribers. P2.50 will be charged per text message sent to Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk & Text subscribers. P3.00 will be charged for Sun Cellular subscribers.
6. Draws will be held on: November 22, December 6, December 13 and December 20. Grand draw will be on January 16, 2007.
7. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent, the more chances of winning.
8. Cut-off dates for entries is every Sunday, 11:59pm prior to the draw date. For the Grand Draw, cut-off will be on December 31, 2006, 11:59pm.
9. Draws will be held at the Wilkinson Subway office in the presence of a representative from MMM, Information Gateway and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
10. Winners will receive a call with any remaining instructions on how to claim their prize. They must be prepared to surrender the M&M's® chocolate wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged, altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with incorrect codes and who were will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
11. Verification procedures will be enforced to ensure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrapper. Representatives from MMM and Master Foods Philippines Inc. will conduct the verification procedure.
12. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
13. Winners will be announced in 2 major newspapers after the grand draw.
14. Prizes are non-transferable and not convertible to cash.
15. All prizes are tax paid.
16. Children under 18 years old are not eligible to join the promo.
17. Employees of Master Foods Philippines Inc. all their appointed suppliers, partners and operators, including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

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Desperation is the mother of cynical invention

TO PUBLICIZE A NEW FILM, ALL YOU NEED to do is pay millions of pesos for an all-out promotional campaign in print, radio and TV. However, if you don't have all those millions to spend, you'll have to make do with more "creative" methods designed to produce the greatest viewer interest in your production—for practically pennies.

Coincidentally, these methods apply not just to a new movie, but also to practically anything else a producer wants to push—including his plump daughter's debut.)

Producers know darn well that the viewing public gets turned on by controversy, so that's what they "reveal" to promote their new film or show:

If something interesting...or preferably shocking—is happening to any member of the production, the producers and his publicity person make sure that the public knows about it.

Anything and everything "interesting" is fair game, because it'll get potential viewers to talk about the star or starlet involved—and, by association, the production.

The bad news is if all of the people in a production are leading lives that are kissed by the gods, and are as pure as the driven snow. That's when the publicist's "creativity" comes into full play and he simply invents dirt where there isn't any.

All sorts of dirt are welcome, but the most **shock-inducing concerned controversies involve love, sex, violence, money problems, conflicts between exes, and "ka-weirdo-hon."**

Take your pick: Male lead is married but **has a fling with his leading lady, who's also** canoodling with someone else. The scandalous possibilities of such romantic triangles and "quadrangles" are delicious for rumormongers to contemplate.

Gender benders are similarly fascinating, **especially if leading males are involved.** Viewers yearn to hamstring cads when brides are the victims. It's even more shocking when the cad is the husband.

Financial woes hit the gossip columns and TV shows when checks bounce, stars live beyond their means, are kicked out of their rocky condo units when they can't pay the rent, are hounded by creditors like car salesmen and coworkers, can't support their love children—the possibilities are as enticing as they are dispiriting.

Conflicts between stars range from the **standard infighting over a desired role**, to more creative cliffs and riffs involving ex and **elaborate**.

As for the "ka-weirdo-hon," it runs from **stars who are reputed to be touched in the** head and neurotic as hell in a straitjacket, to **suicidal types, celebrities who talk to unseen** invisible creatures, and stars who sleep in **coffins.**

If fame still can't whip up a publicity storm for your production, you could also throw in rumors of unwed pregnancy, workers shamed by their director for being unable to set their arm out of a paper bag, celebrities with body odor or bad breath, late-breaking affairs with never-seens, stars looking for their missing parent(s)—etc.

In show biz, desperation is the mother of cynical invention.

'Opera-tic'

The Philippine Opera Company's last term, "Opera-Lite," stars Nelsa Cabahug, Jonis Alarteo Garchitorena, Elren Esquivel, Cesa Rickenbacker, Noreen Espina, Gisela Gutierrez and Jennifer Uy, and features songs based on Pavlovic Chopin's compositions. Like "I'm Mozart's Running Reindeer," "The Way of the Clown," "No Other Love" and "Mimetic Mishe." Shows are on Nov. 23, 24 and 25 at 8 p.m. Call 893-0336.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Anything and everything 'interesting' is fair game

'CD USA'

Every Saturday at noon, Channel 31 presents "CD USA," a weekly music short show that features top artists from every genre, music news and videos. Hosts are Matilda Mallorca, John Wayne and Rocky Sacling.

CHEER FACTOR

Stars read to kids

LONDON—45 SINGER Bob Geldof and actor Roger Moore discovered, both terrible storytellers! I have been told by "Ivy" (a.k.a. another writer) to create mystery reading.

Now, after sweet-talking stars into reciting their favorite poems at sold-out London shows, she is crusading to get poetry put center stage in British schools.

For no fee, the girl never fudges Frances to read "Mill. Anders at one of her British Library poetry hours that sell out months in advance.

Poems James Bond star Roger Moore picked: Rudyard Kipling's "If" and Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Crossing Life by The Thread. How To Read Poetry and Why." She has sent copies of the book and CD to Prince Charles' schools in Britain. Paul Abu Jaudie, Reuters

'Acting needs some help'

ELLEN Burstyn

H'wood veteran Ellen Burstyn says TV has lowered the bar

NEW YORK—ELLEN BURSTYN, winner of an Oscar and a Tony, considers the industrious Golden Globes and Emmys, and recipients of the famed Actors Studio, is not very happy with the standard of American acting these days.

She's not naming names, but Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg and Alec Baldwin can breathe easy. She loved their performances in Martin Scorsese's new movie, "The Departed."

But Burstyn does believe that the demands of television have lowered standards as actors rush from studio to studio with little time to hone their craft on stage.

"Acting? I think it needs some help," the solid Beauty Shop movie actress says. "TV has lowered the bar. With quicker schedules everything is rushed, so the quality gets lowered."

Broadway, she said, is in terrible shape. "I am appalled. (Lane) a couple of things that were billed as good, but they were shockingly bad. I can't recommend anything on Broadway."

Memoir

Burstyn, who has just published a memoir, "Lessons in Becoming Myself," has earned the right to criticize. In a 50-year career, she has appeared on limited-way, in Hollywood and on television. She won the Best Actress Academy Award for 1974's "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" and has a total of six Oscar nominations, seven Golden Globe nominations, a Tony award for "Same Time, Next Year" and an Emmy nomination.

She was the first female president of Actors' Equity and is co-president, with Harvey Keitel and Al Pacino, of the Actors Studio. Long hailed as one of America's finest actresses, her film credits include "The Last Picture Show," "The Exorcist," "Providence," and "The Ring of Marvin Gardens." Her latest movie, "The Fountain," with Rachel Weisz and Hugh Jackman, is being released this month.

Like Dick Reginelli, her co-star in Alain Resnais' 1974 film, "Providence," and whose elegant autobiography is the gold standard in Hollywood, she writes from extremely herself.

"I wrote the whole thing in longhand," she said. "I am more comfortable with that than with a typewriter or a computer. This is not my century. If I had a choice I would ride around in a horse and buggy."

In the book, Burstyn recalls working with Hollywood greats such as Scorsese, Nicholson, William Friedkin, Bob Rafelson and Jodie Foster.

She also writes about raising her son, mostly on her own, and how that wondered on her ground-breaking role as a single mother in "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

More than anything, though, the book is about her journey to self-awareness after rejecting her family's religious background.

"I went 10 years without any spiritual practice in my life, so Burstyn said. "There was a God-shaped hole."

She writes: "If you want to know why you truly are, the answer won't be found in the outer world; you must go inside and see where your instincts lead you."

Sherry Amatenstein, Bloomberg

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Cerrudo series extended

BRYBO Cerrudo

MAKATI CINEMA SQUARE'S CONCERT series for a season, which runs Wednesdays at the Square in Greenhills, has been extended until December.

Three shows have been added to the original '20 show series, "Cerrudo: Classics ... Classic Co" featuring Brybo with a 16-piece ensemble from the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Rodel Colmenares.

The remaining shows are on the benefit of the Balinese group: Stationed Dolmas College of the Philippines Alumni Association and SC '65. Dhow '83; House of Refuge Foundation Inc. (Nov. 22 and 29); Lung Center of the Philippines (Dec. 6); and Philippine Association of Lovers of Orchids (Dec. 13).

New Minstrels at Fiesta San Miguel

Fiesta San Miguel features the pop hits of the '70s and '80s with the New Minstrels every Thursday. Call 807-8833 loc. 2006.

TOSCA Pose

Tosca at Merk's

Tosca Pose sings pop, ballads, reggae and rock in a special engagement at Merk's Bar Bistro, Level 3, Greenbelt 3, Makati City today.

Special guest artist is Tosca's father, Rino J.

Call 757-4720.

Bonifacio Chair concert

The Andres Bonifacio Music Foundation Inc., in cooperation with Philamlife Insurance Co., presents "Sta 143 Ramirez to Sir Andres Bonifacio" on Nov. 30 at the Philamlife Theatre in 109 Ayala.

The concert features the 60-member Andres Bonifacio Choir, which succeeded the Concert Philippines Choir organized by Jerry Dalay in 1961.

Also performing are the New Era University Glee Club, Philippine Daily Inquirer Singers, St. Paul University (QC) Chorale, Santa Teresita Parish Carolo, Sweet Dental Choir and Ateneo Isabel Concert Singers.

Opera, Kundiman shows

UP College of Music Dean and Bayanihan artistic director Ramon "Bimuel" Acoyan coordinates and directs UP's "Opera Ikon ng Masa" and "Proclamation" this Sunday, 8:30, which introduces the new Bayanihan singers.

De La Salle High School's Bayanihan Batch 2007 will be featured in "Proclamation," Nov. 24 and 25, 8 p.m. at St. Joseph's Theater. La Salle Greenhills. The nine singing ambassadors, all 16-year-olds, are Aaron de la Cruz, Joseph Pudong, Ken Alcantara, Paolo Ordoña, Edd Dizon, Jasper Manalo, Miguel Nuñez, Raffy Ildefonso and Thomas Co.

Call 721-3000.

'Suzuki Christmas Carol'

Shangri-La Plaza presents "A Suzuki Christmas Carol," a show with 50 kids ages 5-14 performing the carols "O Come all Ye Faithful," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Silent Night," and "Joy to the World" on Dec. 18, 3 p.m. at the Shangri-La Plaza fountain area.

The concert features students in the Suzuki Method Method at Greenhills Music Studio in soloists: pianists Derrick Sy, Nathan Bonagan, Clyde Ledesma, Sonja Aclan, Ramon Lorenzo; cellists Thea Balbuena and violinists Mitch Sioson, Andie Reyes, Jaren Balbuena and Iris Aclan.

Call 724-0581.

Today

Aldo A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Tomorrow

MYMP and Dindo at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Nov. 24

Jet Session at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Fete at Dusit Compasso Bistro

Nov. 25

Stanley Street and Maisie at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Orange and Lemons at Barsky Makati

Nov. 27

Overtones, Coffeebreak Island and Humble Sauce at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Nov. 28

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Nov. 29

The New Minstrels and Juan Pablo Rosass at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Nov. 30

MYMP and Dindo at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

SUPERMAN